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ABSTRACT

This volume is a sampling of 18 pieces of writing by students in a workplace education writing course called Advanced Writing. It contains the following poems, fiction, and nonfiction written in and outside of class: "Artist" (Bruce Bass); "Tuesday Morning" (Kathy Colon); "House" (Lee Christian); "Life" (Alice Chapin); "A Cat Story" (Jane E. Carroll); "A Trilogy: Eugene" (Christine Heard); "The Day Daddy Brought Home the Television Set" (Elisabeth Williams); "Poems" (Carl Davignon); "Coming Home" (Mike Drew); "In This Photo..." (Linda Hillenbrand, Claire Galenski Myette, Carl Davignon, Janet Verrill); "Rhubarb" (Lee Christian); "Birth" (Kathy Colon); "Mirror Rock" (Judie Towlson); "Joey, A Special Kid" (Linda Hillenbrand); "Love Is Too Precious" (Janet Verrill); "Writing the Moment" (Claire Galenski Myette, Bruce Bass, Sophie Sidur); "My Brother Bill" (David Hutchins); "Ordinary and Wild Panic" and "Poems from Shatterland" (Eugenie Harvey); "Battle at Cam Le Bridge--August 1968" and "Desert Storm--1991" (Lee Forester); "The Knight in Shining Armor" and "The Nineties Princess (Faith)" (Janet Verrill); "The Snag of the Century" and "Everything He Knew" (Francis Martin, Jr.); "Dialogue," including "You, Me, I See" (Bruce Bass), "Untitled" (Janet Verrill), and "I Can See You, But I Can't Hear You" (Jane E. Carroll); "Two Songs," including "He Wasn't a Hero" and "Katie" (William Jacque); "Up at 4:00 Drinking Milk and Honey" (Eugenie Harvey); "Untitled" (Lee Christian); "New Found Friends" (Bruce Bass); "What Are Friends for?" (Jane E. Carroll); and "Kisses from Maine" (Kathy Colon). Writers' biographies are appended. (YLB)

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ED 404 493

# Reflections Beneath the Surface

# We Are More Than You See

Writings by

Bruce Bass
Jane E. Carroll
Alice Chapin
Lee Christian
Kathy Colon
Carl Davignon
Mike Drew
Lee Forester
Eugenie Harvey
Christine Heard
Linda Hillenbrand
David Hutchins
William Jacque
Francis Martin, Jr.
Claire Galenski Myette
Sophie Sidur
Judie Towlson
Janet Verrill
Elisabeth Williams

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L Hillenbrand

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# Reflections Beneath the Surface: We Are More Than You See

"Looking into a well
You see a reflection on the surface
Never what lies underneath . . .
As I . . . ."

Carl Davignon

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&
Labor/Management Workplace Education Program
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# Introduction

## Sue Thrasher

It's hard to pinpoint the origins of this volume. The story has one beginning in the fall of 1995 when most of the people whose writing appears here came together in a course called Advanced Writing. The story might also begin in the very first workplace education writing class in 1993 when Lee Christian read "House." (See page 5.) There was silence in the room as we took in the powerful writing and the emotion we had just heard. Lee's writing and his willingness to share both the writing and the emotional impact of writing established a tone that has continued throughout all four incarnations of the Workplace Education writing classes.

The title "Reflections Beneath the Surface: We Are More Than You See" is, in its own way, a shout, demanding that we peer beneath the surface by listening to these voices. The departmental secretary, the maintainer sweeping the floor, the heating and air conditioning man, the plumber, the person removing snow and sand from the sidewalks are all more than we see. In this volume, they allow us to see them as artists.

It has been my great luck and pleasure to be the instructor/facilitator of these classes. My goals have been simple, to create a space where employees have time to explore their creative talents in a supportive peer group environment, and to encourage people to write from their hearts and their experience. The

Photo by Bill Russell

Some of the members of the Fall 1995 writing group (from l-r): Carl Davignon, Janet Verrill, David Hutchins, Jane E. Carroll, Lee Christian, Kathy Colon, Christine Heard, Lee Forester, Mike Drew, Francis Martin, Jr., and Linda Hillenbrand.

space we have made together has often been magical; people in these classes take very good care of each other and believe in each other, and encourage each other. That has been important. The writing that has come forth as a result is beautiful and powerful.

This volume is a sampling: Lee Forester, at the tender age of eighteen, in the middle of a fire fight in Vietnam; Linda Hillenbrand writing about her son, Joey; the sensuality of Christine Heard's killing a cow — and meeting her man; David Hutchins poignant memories of his brother, Bill; Carl Davignon's deep and lovely poetry; Francis Martin's seasoned storytelling. They are all here. And many more. Some of the writing comes directly from the class, such as the selections in "Writing the Moment" on page 28, and the selections from "In this Photo" on page 17. Some of the writing was simply too personal for inclusion here; other writers and veterans of the class have moved away and we were not able to get in touch with them.

During the time the Labor/Management Workplace Education Program has sponsored these classes, we have drawn on a wealth of local resource people. Peter Elbow, author of several books on writing and a professor in the English Department at U/Mass, has visited two classes; his approach to writing and supportive feedback have been especially important in developing a peer writing group. Pat Schneider, of Amherst Writers and Artists, has also been an inspiration. Pat has come to classes and has suggested other resource people. We are indebted to her for the exercise, "In this photo..." Other resource people include Richard Andersen, Jim Foudy, Editor of the Hampshire Gazette, Anna Kirwan-Vogel of Amherst Writers and Artists, and Kitty Axelson Berry.

Amherst, MA
April 1996

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# Artist

## Bruce Bass

I think of myself as an artist most of the time. I like to write now more than ever because I know I will be heard. What I mean is that I can share and paint pictures with music. I guess that's being an artist to a certain extent.

One of the greatest feelings is to see and touch people and to see that they know someone feels like they do. We sometimes fail to realize that we have a lot to offer and so we tend to take a quiet approach to things. I know that because that's how I am. Sometimes it's good and sometimes not. I had to find a balance between the two. Slowly but surely I'm getting there. That's the artist in me — the balance. As a writer I want to be understood as an artist. I want to be seen. Do you know what I mean? I think you do. If not I'll keep trying different angles to help you to help me.

# Tuesday Morning

Kathy Colon

Coming down 116 this morning
up the hill over 91
I could *feel*
how *small* I was
on this road
in this town
in this state
in this part of the country
in this part of the hemisphere
on this planet
in this galaxy
in this millennium of time and space
And feeling so much
a part of it all
I really didn't feel
so small
anymore...

# House

## Lee Christian

"It finally sold," I thought as I climbed out of my car in front of the house. I was beginning to think we would never sell it. This was it. One last walk through to see if I had forgotten to take anything, leave the keys in the drawer in the kitchen, and it will be all over.

Upstairs first. Check the attic. Nothing there. I wonder what the new owners will think when they see all the names written on the walls in blue chalk. It seems strange to see the attic so empty. It was always full of junk.

Out through the empty spare bedroom. Standing at the door to my old bedroom, memories come flooding back: mornings so cold that I could see my breath condense above my face; Taffy, our dog, trying to pull the covers off of me; my mother calling for me to get up and the smell of bacon frying. Empty now, except for my BSA tie rack, hanging in the closet.

Down the hallway to check the bathroom. Dad and I did most of the remodeling. I can almost see Dad sitting in the middle of the floor laughing after he had hooked the hot water line to the toilet, for the second time.

To the left of the bathroom, two empty bedrooms... Mom and Dad's and Cheryl's. God, I miss her. I can still hear Mom complaining that her room was always a mess.

Back downstairs. The stairs still creak when you walk on them. Check the cellar first. Mostly empty. Whatever's left, can stay. It sure looks a lot different than when we first moved in. The old coal and wood furnace and coal bin are gone. Good riddance. It was a lot of work keeping a fire going in that thing.

Upstairs to the first floor. The empty living room and dining rooms; lots of memories there. Watching Saturday morning cartoons lying on the living room floor, and in the evenings, watching whatever Dad wanted to watch.

Nothing left in the downstairs bathroom. I'll always think of this room as the den, which it was until Mom converted it after Dad died. Cheryl and I did our home work here, Mom and Dad sat here to read; Dad died here. Maybe that's why Mom had a bathroom installed.

The dining room. Memories of Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners with aunts and uncles and cousins around the table, everyone talking loudly.

Through the kitchen to the back storage rooms. No boots, wet mittens and jackets, empty now. Back to the kitchen.

I guess there is nothing I've forgotten. Put the keys in the cabinet drawer. I look around one last time. In my mind, I see Mom standing at the stove and Dad reading the paper at the kitchen table. It's time to go. I close the door behind me, and walk to my car taking my memories with me.

---

*Note from the author*: "House" was written in the first writing class offered through L/MWEP. In the previous year, I had lost both my mother and my sister. I was, therefore, the only surviving member of my family. The house I grew up in was my only tangible link to my family and my past; and for more than a year, I resisted selling it. It was very difficult to let go. Finally, I could put it off no longer and sold the house. With this piece, I both let go of the house and allowed myself to hold onto my past.

# Life

## Alice Chapin

When looking for your place in life
don't go too far ahead
You may be missing something good
that's just around the bend
Be sure to stop along the way
and make yourself a friend
In dealing with your thoughts and cares
be gentle with yourself

Keep in mind that you
are the one who
is living through

This life you are making
When traveling on a path that's new
watch for the stumbling stones
In reaching for your goals my friend
don't let them pass you by
Don't let the bad times cloud the good
and keep you spirits high
Take from this life the best you can
leave some for others too

Keep in mind that you
are the one who
is living through

This life that you are making
Be careful how you thread your way
on twisted paths anew
Whatever seeds that you may plant
will all be sure to grow
Don't let the weeds get in your way
be careful on how you mow
Lest in your haste you make some waste
of things you'd rather keep

# A Cat Story

Jane E. Carroll

The cat walks quickly through the kitchen door into the house. His thoughts are only on getting warm by the heat of the house and being fed by his loving owner and caretaker. He quickly and briefly checks to see what tiny morsels, what goodness, has been left for him. A little dry food would be all right, but he is looking for something more in the line of moist licking jaw food. His nose curls up with a gesture of a smile as he contentedly eats away the delightful food that is provided by me, his owner. I check to make sure that his water dish has water in it for him, so that he can quench his thirst and wash down his delicacy. Contentedly, he moseys into the other rooms of the house to see what soft and comforting space is available. He passes by the cat bed and looks for something better and more interesting. He readies to take his cat nap of several hours until his tummy starts to tell him there is hunger in there. Or that he needs to go back outside, or if the weather doesn't suit him, to use the kitty litter so carefully arranged for his needs.

Periodically, he might wake to sit up on the window sill to see what is going on outside. There might be a bird, squirrel, or a neighbor's cat running about. All of this has to be weighed out in detail, because that is his life, his only life. A contented life of a cat who is loved and cherished by his owner. He is very independent. He will climb upon my lap when he desires or go about his way when he chooses not to.

Occasionally, he plans a hunt. This is the last of the wildness of the domesticated cat. It gives him play time and power. It becomes a gentle game in all senses. The watch, the gentle movement towards the prey, the gently tossing and bashing before the end comes. The tragic end of the rodent in capture. The prey tries to escape, but there is no escaping because the cat is faster and has very sharp claws and teeth.

I have come to the conclusion that he has been sharpening his claws on my lilac bush and silver maple tree all summer. On occasion, and more than I care to think about, I suspect the arms of my living room couch are used for this purpose.

He sits outside on the good days to watch the school children walk by. He does this hoping against hope he will get a gentle pat on the head, and that the children will tell him what a good cat he is. This does happen, because the children tend to be pleased by him.

Now that you are familiar with this delightful creature, it is time for you to learn his name. He was named and is called Scooby. He is my son's cat, whom I have raised in good faith because my son is not home often. Scooby is a very large cat and has short grey fur. He loves to lay on his back and look up at the ceiling and sky, but mostly Scooby likes to eat and sleep.

# A Trilogy: Eugene

Christine Heard

## Sweat

Yesterday Michael and David showed up with a hydraulic wood splitter just as I got inside the door, home from work. Quickly I changed to my jeans and an old shirt, then joined them in the yard. They hauled the splitter to the smallest of the three piles of big chunks. Michael loaned me ear protectors, a band with large earphone-like appendages which immediately muffled the noise of the splitter's gas engine. We soon established a routine. David picked up the chunks of wood and set them waist high onto the splitter's rail. Michael ran the machine, moving a lever that set the wedge in motion forwards into the wood, then backwards leaving two neat halves of the log.

My job was to remove the pieces and throw them onto the growing pile. We worked in a sort of silence, unable to communicate verbally because of the ear protectors. We gestured, nodded, mouthed simple phrases. These men had been working since 7:30 am and were tired and hot. I came fresh from my office job, full of energy. The men sweated, the motor chugged, the wood cracked and popped as it split.

I could smell their sweat, strong, musky, delicious to my senses as it mingled with whiffs of the gas engine. This combination of smells brought my dead husband to mind. He had been a farmer, a sawyer, a woodcutter for most of his 68 years. He came to bed at night smelling sweetly of his honest sweat, shedding his oil and gas stained clothes to climb in beside me. His warm, firm limbs stretched alongside mine. I put my head against his barrel chest... nightly enjoying the comfort of his familiar smell and his bare flesh against mine.

The last time I touched him was to rearrange his hair, so carefully combed by the undertaker, into the careless mussed look more normal for him. His forehead was solid and cold, the feel of him more lifeless than he looked lying there in the clothes he'd worn to our wedding.

## How I Met My Man

I loved Eleanor, our old Jersey cow. But she had a severe case of mastitis and the prognosis for her ever again producing much milk was poor. Bill, Nancy and I, her joint owners, decided she should be put down. Bill was willing to do the job himself; but, as I said before, I loved Eleanor and the thought of a botched amateur slaughtering job made my insides curl up. Another friend, Jack, said he knew an old dairy farmer that could do the job. I was relieved that someone who knew what he was doing would be slaughtering her. On the appointed day, a mild morning in January, Jack arrived at Bill and Nancy's farm with Eugene, a man of medium height with a barrel chest, short gray hair, and a clean

shaven but wrinkled face. Eugene brought his tools, his .22 rifle, a whiffle tree and a collection of knives with short blades, some double sided and some curved. His nephew, Pete, accompanied him, a tall thin young man with dirty blonde hair.

The old farmer set to work, looping a big chain over a sturdy branch of a large sugar maple in the yard. To this he attached the whiffle tree, a stout oak pole with a sharp, sturdy hook at either end. He sharpened his blades.

When all was ready, I volunteered to bring the cow down, confident that I could do so calmly, without upsetting her. I trudged up the rise to the barn, unhooked Eleanor from the stanchion, and led her out talking to her quietly. "I love you, Eleanor. You've been a good ole cow. You've given us gallons and gallons of rich, delicious milk, more milk than these two families could ever drink! You've been happy here, eating the grass in the field, drinking from the brook, chewing your cud in the barn all night. And you've given us your calf, Hamburger who we'll eat next year. Your time's up, Eleanor. We're going to put you down now. A fellow who knows how to do it is here to do it right. You won't feel a thing. Bye now. I love you, Eleanor." My hands were shaking but my voice was steady. I kept my head down so no one would see the dampness in my eyes.

We'd reached the maple. I hugged Eleanor's warm brown neck. Bill, Nancy and Jack hung back, curious to watch but not wanting to be involved. With my hand on her halter under her chin, I held Eleanor's head steady while Eugene put the rifle barrel to her forehead. "You have to put the rifle in a certain spot and at a certain angle so the bullet enters the brain and stuns her, knocks 'er right out," he explained what he was doing. One shot... Eleanor sank down on her front knees, paused, and then her back legs gave way. "Quickly now, roll her on her side." Eugene made cuts above her back hooves between the tendons and the bone. The whiffle tree hooks went into those cuts; and with the use of a come-along, we pulled her up so that she hung from her heels in the tree. Working rapidly the farmer slit her throat with a double sided knife and allowed the blood to drain from her body. He talked of saving the blood, using it to make blood pudding, but none of us were interested. The blood flowed out to the ground, pumping out at first then slowing to a steady stream and then a thin trickle. Eleanor was dead then; the worst was over.

As soon as most of the blood had been emptied Eugene slit her belly from tail to chest. He and I plunged our hands into the abdomen, pulling out the liver and heart, which he cut off and set aside, then the stomach and the large mass of greenish intestines and other organs. Eugene cut off her head, and I cut out her tongue, a delicacy that I preferred. I no longer felt squeamish or sad... this was a job that had to be done. The most time-consuming part came next, removing the hide. Eugene gave me one of his skinning knives; he took another. Each working on a different side, we cut around the leg below the hooks, then cut along the inside of the leg. We tugged downward on the hide, cutting it away from the flesh when necessary. Eugene and I worked together for a good half

hour with help from Pete and Bill before the carcass hung naked and empty before us. Eugene cut it in half lengthwise and we lowered each half to the ground. We hauled one half into the shed attached to Bill and Nancy's kitchen. The other we put in the back of my station wagon. Eugene gathered up his tools. He and Pete accompanied me back up the road to my house where the two of them helped me hang my half in my shed to age a few weeks in the winter air.

Six months later in the early fall, we repeated the process with Eleanor's son, Hamburger. I felt no sorrow for the steer; he'd broken through his fence at my house to trample and chew down my corn. But again, I admired and felt confidence in the farmer's slaughtering expertise.

Eugene would not accept payment this time either, except for taking the beef liver that none of us wanted. I decided that we should give him a bottle of liquor by way of payment; Jack informed me that Gene liked Yukon Jack Canadian whiskey. I bought a bottle and drove up to his farm in the next town. Gene was splitting wood up on a hill that overlooked his farm. I pulled up and began to walk through the field. He saw me, put down his axe and came down to me. I handed him the bottle with a few words of thanks, then on impulse reached up and kissed him. Devilment impelled me to this; I perceived Eugene as stodgy and conservative, someone that would be startled by a woman kissing him in broad daylight in the middle of his field. Somewhat embarrassed by my own bravado, I quickly returned to my car and drove home. (I learned later that his mother had observed this interaction from the kitchen window. When he came in, she demanded to know "Who was that woman, and what did she want?")

More months passed. I answered my door one Sunday morning to find Eugene standing there. "Come on in. Want a cup of coffee?" He accepted the coffee with milk and sugar. I sat in the rocker by the wood stove, and he sat in a chair next to the kitchen table. We chatted about the weather and gardening. He asked about the beef from the steer: was it tender? Tasty? I wondered why he'd come, but visitors were common in my busy house; relatives came for the weekend or for the summer; friends and neighbors dropped by; strangers came to the door when their cars ran out of gas. I concluded he must have been driving by and stopped in just to chat. The conversation dwindled and Gene stood up to leave. I stood, too, and we faced one another. Something drew us together. He put his arms around me, and we kissed, briefly and gently, before he left.

All the next week I pondered this encounter. Why had Eugene come to visit? Why had I kissed this older man I barely knew? What had drawn us together? I recollected how the kiss had felt, tentative, tender. I remembered the comfort of being briefly enclosed in those strong arms, the surprising size of his torso, larger than my arms could encircle. I realized that although Eugene was considerably older than me, he was single and therefore a candidate for a deeper relationship. When the weekend came and my children were visiting their father, the pull of Gene's encompassing hug led me to decide to visit him.

Driving up the road to his farm I noticed him standing outside his nearest neighbor's house, talking with his neighbor and a woman. I pulled my car over, jumped out and joined the conversation. Gene performed introductions, "This is Flip," he said of the other woman. "We call her that because she drives so fast that she flipped her car over last spring! And this is Tommie, the neighbor kid." Tommie was my age, a tall, good looking fellow in his forties. Gene turned to me, "And this here's the woman with the Jersey cow. What brought you up here?"

"I came to visit you."

"Well, come on then. Let's go home." He grabbed my hand and hustled me back to my car so we could drive up the road to his house. We spent the whole afternoon walking in his woods.

That walk marked the turning point from casual acquaintance to a more serious relationship. Slaughtering a milk cow seems an unlikely avenue to romance, but it led Eugene and me to our long and happy love affair.

## Ants on Wickett Pond

Wickett Pond Photo by John Christopher

I had not known him long, it was our first summer. One Sunday, a day without my children, I persuaded him to take my old rowboat out on Wickett Pond. He gathered his fishing gear, two poles and his rusty old blue metal tackle box, and dug a coffee can full of worms from my garden. I, in an attempt to create an elegant, romantic outing, packed crab meat salad with fresh garden lettuce and chives, a good Swiss cheese, crackers, fresh fruit, and a bottle of dry white wine.

Together we loaded the old boat into the back of my station wagon. The paint was peeling off in long latex strips. In places the wood was soft and crumbly. But the oars and locks were there; we loaded them in, too.

A ten minute ride brought us to the pond, a long, oval shallow pond in the state forest with a boat launch at one end. Trees edged the shore, white, gray, black and yellow birches, maples, oaks, alders. We unloaded the boat into the water, stashed the picnic, the wine and the fishing gear. I climbed in; ever the gentleman, he pushed us off and jumped in too.

At last the coaxing and persuading, the picnic-making and packing paid off. I stretched out, exposing my legs to the afternoon sun. He rowed down the pond, then let us drift while he impaled a worm on his hook and cast across the still water. Using the corkscrew, I opened the wine and poured us each a cup. Romance, if not elegance, pulsated in the air.

Then he called my attention to a disturbing fact. Large black ants were crawling out of the rotten wood on the side of the boat. Some turned pond-ward and went over the edge down into the water. Others turned inward and headed towards the bottom of the boat. Here the ants met another disturbing fact, water in the bottom of the boat. Our craft was leaking!

"What are you trying to do to me? Taking me out in this leaky old boat rotten with ants... you know I can't swim! Is this a plot on my life?"

"No... no!" I assured him. "I didn't know the boat was leaking. I sure didn't know it was full of ants!"

We brushed the ants into the water where they floated off, gradually sinking one by one. He saved a few and tried them as bait. They lured no more fish than did the garden worms. The leak was slow; occasionally I dipped excess water out with a cup. We drank wine. I rowed and he fished. He rowed and I served crabmeat salad, cheese and crackers. We drifted down the length of the pond, stopping for kisses or to brush an ant to a watery death.

As the sun fell below the treetops, a beaver joined us on the pond. A vee-shaped wake was the first sign as he swam out from the shore, oblivious to our presence for a while. Once he noticed us, he swam our way, a large dark head purposefully and smoothly propelled towards us. Suddenly a loud splash echoed across the water as the beaver whacked his tail against the water, simultaneously diving under. We waited and watched til he reappeared. Again he approached, slapped his tail to indicate that this was HIS pond and we were disturbing his evening activities. We drank more wine and watched his determined antics. Eventually, he tired of us and swam away. We too, tired, aimed the boat for the landing and headed home.

"I love you so much, Gene; I think you're wicked cute!"

"Cute!! How can you call an old fart like me 'cute'?"

# The Day Daddy Brought Home the Television Set

Elisabeth Williams

It was in the mid 1960's and I was in the second grade at Carrboro Elementary. I'd been hearing all the kids at school describe something they had at home, something that gave them immense pleasure. I don't remember them calling it anything, just excitedly describing visual experiences — shows, I think they called them — with sound, too. I'd be in a group of four or five people. At some point inevitably, they would start talking about something they had seen the night before. They went on and on; it seemed like this thing, whatever it was, was a lot of fun.

When I asked the other kids what this was, they all stopped and looked at me as if I had three hands and five eyes. Well, gee whiz! I'd never seen one, what was I supposed to do? I felt really left out.

One evening at home, I had decided I'd had enough and I couldn't take it anymore. I told my parents about this magic thing with shows on it and explained to them that it was very important that we obtain one. Whatever it was called. Right away.

My folks exchanged knowing glances and said "She's talking about a television." They tried to tell me that they weren't as great as the kids made them out to be. But whoa! Nothing doing. We had to GET ONE OF THESE THINGS, NOW!

Well, it wasn't the next day, but eventually it happened. My father walked in one evening, right before supper time, carrying a box. He said to me, "Well Betsy, this is it." Oh God, was I excited! I could hardly wait. "Okay, let's see it! Let's get it going!" But, no — it was supper time and my parents said we'd check it out after we got dinner out of the way.

I threw a fit. Here, we had the thing, finally — so let's have it. I really did kick up a fuss, complete with tears and strained vocal cords until they gave in. Oh boy, oh boy, oh boy! The moment was here. I could taste it. Daddy set it on top of the washing machine there in the kitchen and plugged it in. I was watching intently. First, a little white dot appeared in the middle of the screen, and it stayed and stayed there for what seemed like an eternity. Dad said it was warming up. Oh brother! But then it came on, and oh my God, oh no, what was this? There was a man pictured in black and white, in a suit, holding a piece of paper and reading. Oh no! This was not what the kids at school talked about. We flipped through the channels, all four, and they were all the same. For cryin' out loud, my dumb father had gone off and bought the WRONG kind! I could not believe it. I told Daddy this was NOT what I wanted; he had gotten the wrong thing and please take it back and get another one. How maddening!

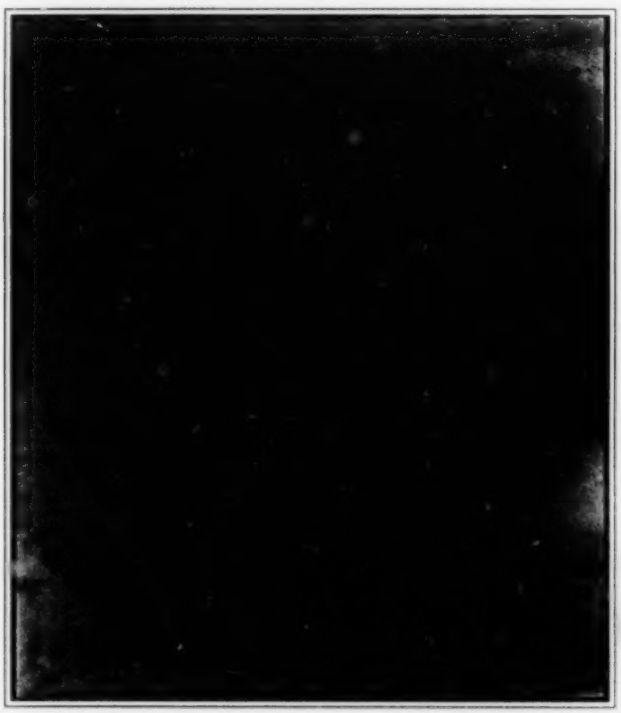
In the days and weeks to follow I was to learn that every day around supper time, men in suits with pieces of paper came on TV. It was the 6 o'clock news, followed by a whole host of funny and scary, magically entertaining shows. Just like the kids had described.

# Poems

## Carl Davignon

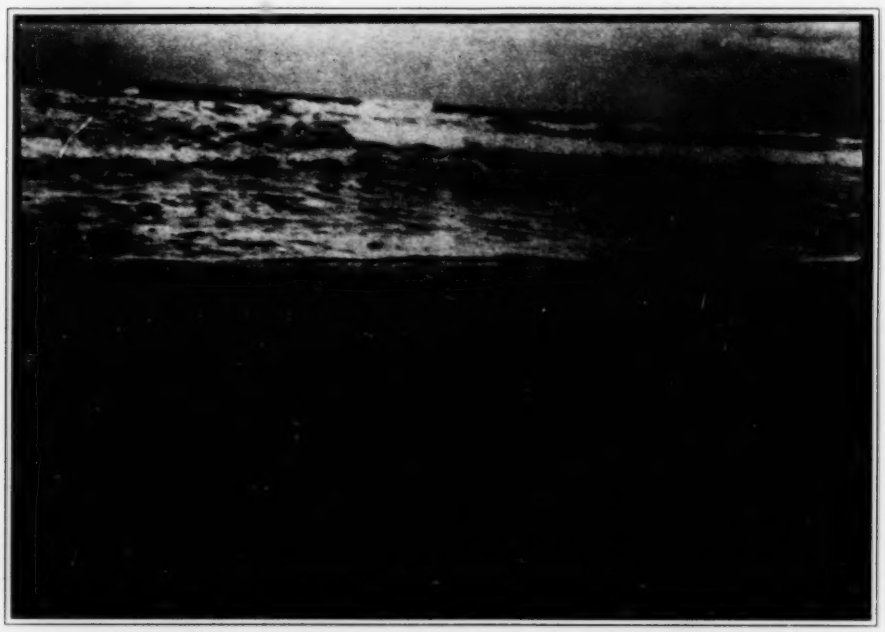
I've seen your tears held deep within
Like many a time on a different face
The time will come, when you will be as they
A memory of a time not so long ago
Then for myself
I'll be able to wipe the pain to make you smile

The stories of so few are many
Stories of memories past, dreams yet to come
Stories held deep within
Of times we shall never forget, some of times we never knew
When I leave, I will never forget, stories of you



I've seen you many times,
but if only in my mind.
We talk of words, of only a
few can hear.
Some of which lie in our
minds, some in our hearts.
The sounds will fade, the
memories will remain... of
you...

When I look at these photos, which are many, I see a time of long ago.
A time so near?
Times not like you. I have never seen.
Which I am fortunate.
When I look at you I see these times.
Memories of a time not forgotten.
For it's you and the many photos that we will always remember.



The music is of a time past, the words are of today. When I look at you I hear those sounds of a time not so long ago. If we were to fantasize, mine would be of you and the whispers of those times. As for today, thank you for the smiles you have brought. I hope that maybe I too have touched you in some small way.

# Coming Home

## Mike Drew

They heard the car door close and were standing on the half rotting porch by the time I reached it. One of these days, somebody is going to fall through it, but right now it was not the first thing on my mind — or theirs.

"Where the fuck ya been? It's two in the morning and we've been waiting up all night for ya."

"Huh?" I whisper sheepishly. I've been afraid of this moment since I first began to have a good time tonight. "Can't we go inside. You're gonna wake everybody up."

"I don't give a fuck who knows what's going on. Get your ass in this house right this minute, or you won't know what hit you!"

She makes me go in front of her, then stalks me down the hallway. I don't dare turn around cause I know I'd get it. I keep my eyes straight ahead, but keep getting distracted by the Victorian design on the dingy yellow wallpaper. It's the first time in the ten years I've lived here that I notice how lovely it is.

I can't tell if anyone else in the apartment house is awake, but faith tells me most of them are. It probably won't help anyway. I am sure my brothers are up.

The door to our apartment is still open and I walk through the living room right into the kitchen. Don't know why, but it's the most comforting room in the house. What I really want is to go straight to bed and feel my head touch the pillow. Just before I get to the kitchen, I accidently step on the cast iron heating grate. I hate the loud brittle noise it makes so I always avoid it, except for tonight. Tonight it sets my nerves off and I know I am in hell until the morning.

Two empty coffee cups with stains dribbling down the side are on the table, alongside a half bottle of beer. But they don't really tell me how long my folks have been waiting up. Everyone is quiet as we sit down at the table. All of a sudden I start to feel high. Giddy, even. But I know not to smile or she'll keep this interrogation going on forever. She'll never be satisfied. Whatever information she gets out of me, she'll still want more.

Maybe if I blink my eyes to make them look heavy she'll get the hint that I need to go to bed. I try a little yawn, but not a full blown one. Want her to think I am sincere about it.

"Can we talk about it tomorrow? It's real late."

"You've been out all night and you didn't even call to let us know where you were."

"Okay. Okay. But we can talk about it tomorrow ?"

"You ain't going nowhere. You are gonna keep your ass in that chair until we are finished. If you can keep us up til 2:00 am then we can keep you up all night too. I don't care if the birds start chirping by the time we're done."

Uugh... I better keep all my answers short. That way I have a chance of getting paroled from the kitchen before going to school.

"So, where were you all night? Huh?"

"I was out."

"Out where?"

"Out with a friend."

It didn't matter to her that this silly question and answer period was like moving pawns in a bad chess game. She kept at it.

"Where did you go? What's your friend's name?"

She had guessed what kind of friend he was, so she made an extra effort to sneer in my face when she said "friend." She wanted me to know how repulsed she was.

# In this photo...

*In this photo* was one of our writing exercises. The following pieces were written in class.

## Linda Hillenbrand

In this photo you look like your father, and if I look close enough I can see myself in your face too. Your blue eyes, dimples and ketchup on your shirt make me smile. I remember fondly the argument we had about which shirt you would wear for picture day and also the look you gave me when you saw the pictures and realized that I was right. I've seen that look too many times to count.

In this photo the baby-ness is gone from your face and a young man is emerging. A bright, energetic young man with a beautiful heart, very close to my own. *Love, Mom.*

## Claire Galenski Myette

In this photograph I am alone. Who am I? I know who I am. Does my friend really know me? Do my mother or father really know me after life has taken its course? I didn't change much, but yes I did change. Why? My son and daughter don't really know me. I'm one person at home, another at work. I try to explain but no one will listen. Why doesn't anyone listen? Is it because each of my family and friends want to have one perception of me or is it because I am a woman? Don't be too assertive, don't do what you want, but do what you want. Is it control? No, I won't be controlled.

## Carl Davignon

In this photo, you are amongst trees. Colors of fiery red, sunburst yellows, vivid orange, fading browns. The ground covered with these shades as once again the trees will soon be bare. The sky blustery grey, filling the air with the coming winter's chill. In the center is a woman, older, as time has forgot. Short, stout, grey hair. A golden coat of an era long ago. Standing proud, tall. These are her leaves, this is her photo, this is my grandmother...

## Janet Verrill

In this photograph you see my daughter Leah, fourteen years old. She is performing a dance she choreographed herself to the music "Memories" from the Broadway show *Cats*. She is dressed in filmy white and has the look of an angel, so perfect for the circumstances behind this dance.

Photo by Joe Krusas

Leah had been working on the choreography for several weeks, for a variety show called "The Autumn Chill Out." It was a fund raising event being held four nights at the Shea Theater in Turners Falls. It was a graceful dance from the beginning, but grew to become a heartfelt expression of deep inner love mingled with unreachable sorrow. She danced from her heart, with all her heart. Three weeks before this show opened, Leah's closest friend and confidant, someone who had helped her survive unbearable pain and horror, who had shown her love, compassion, and literally helped keep her alive when life didn't seem worth living, found the agonies of life itself just too much to bear. On November 6, 1991 Leah's friend Peter shot and killed himself.

It was an unbelievable shock to Leah and her heart broke into a million pieces. Her dance turned from one merely sad because of the music, to one showing great inner feelings, evidence of extreme loss and unmatchable love. She danced for Peter. How appropriately had she chosen the song "Memories." Her movements flowed across the stage in undeniable evidence of the agonizing loss her heart was experiencing. You could feel the love and emotion emanate from her every move. The beauty and grace of that expression of love and sorrow are captured forever for me in this photograph. The sight of an angelic creature floating on slight wisps of fog will forever be etched in my mind and in my heart.

# Rhubarb

Lee Christian

"It's rhubarb," Mom said. "Try a bite. Its good for you." I wasn't sure about this, but Mom wouldn't tell me something was good when it wasn't. I took a bite.

"Arggh." I spit it out. It was horrible. How could it be good for you when it tasted so bad? Mom was cutting the stalks into small pieces, and putting them into a pie plate with crust on the bottom.

I had enough of this rhubarb and I certainly didn't think I wanted any of the pie she was making.

"Can I go over to Eddie's house?" I asked.

"Yes, you can", she replied, "as long as you come home when your father gets home from work."

"Okay Mom."

I went out the front door and across the porch to the front steps. Across the street, Eddie was throwing a tennis ball onto the roof of his house, and catching it when it rolled down and off the roof.

"Hey Eddie", I yelled.

He looked a time and waved.

I ran across the street and Eddie threw the ball to me, I caught it and threw it back.

"Guess what?" I said. "Mom made me eat some rhubarb. It was awful. Yuck."

"Rhubarb's okay." he said.

"No, it's not."

"Yes, it is. Come with me and I'll show you."

We went over to the rhubarb patch in Eddie's yard (I guess everyone had one) and pulled up two stalks of rhubarb. We went into Eddie's house through the backdoor.

Eddie went over to the sink, picked up a knife and cut the leaves and white ends from the stalks. He poured some sugar in a cup, handed me a stalk and said, "Dip the end in the sugar and take a bite."

Remembering the way that it tasted, I hesitated.

"Go ahead."

I dipped the end in the sugar and held it up in front of my face. I still wasn't sure.

Finally, I thought, "Why not?" and took a bite. It was really good and I told Eddie it was.

"See, I told you so," he said.

I guess Mom forgot to tell me about the sugar.

# Birth

Kathy Colon

From a long distance voyage
arrives this new life
still nestled in the wonder
of its own creation.

A voyage from where...
where does it begin?

Beyond the clouds...
across the heavens...
from a star only unknown
to our earthly form?

Were you guided by angels
or following you instinctive purpose
as a monarch in its patterned flight?

I welcome you
who are so small
and yet so *full*
of Life.

Mother, burst forth
with songs you will sing
and the stories you long to tell.

For the *joy*
will long follow
into these eyes of tomorrow

And the passion
for Life
shall remain

New eyes of age
with new thoughts to reveal
of the Passion for Life
and the strength of the wheel...

Of the Universe in motion
unto a day yet to come
where Passion
and Truth
and Love
are One.

# Mirror Rock

Judie Towlson

I had heard so much about this place and had promised Lissa and Michael a Fall picnic. It was a bit overcast, but still nice enough to enjoy the view on one of the small mountains overlooking our town. I had instructions from my friend's husband on how to best reach this location called Mirror Rock, so all Saturday morning I was pushing the children to do their chores so that we could go on our expedition. Daylight savings time had just started the previous Saturday and already I was beginning to feel shut in. The kids were procrastinating, and it looked like we would have a mid-afternoon snack instead of a luncheon picnic.

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Sure enough, it was 1:15 before everything was done and we were heading towards the mountain. I parked the car at the end of a housing project and we headed up the trail that I could see just beyond the field. Lissa, my firstborn, was 10 at the time and Michael was 8. I've always felt that they would have much more fun if they brought a friend. Lissa had chosen Beth to come along and Michael had chosen her brother, Bob. As a child, I was a tomboy and spent lots of my time in the woods so it was as much fun for me as the kids. However, Lissa tired easily and Michael was very active and prone to mishaps.

With that in mind, I kept the boys close to me to prevent any accidents. The girls were cautious so they were allowed to lead the way.

The trail steepened and became rocky. Michael and Bob were teasing each other and not being careful of the crevices, so we stopped to have a mini-lecture on safety. Now that we were nearing the top of the mountain, the girls were out of sight, but that was OK, I knew they would be sitting on Mirror Rock enjoying the view. This was a frequent trail the Boy Scouts used so I felt comfortable.

To my surprise when we arrived at the top, it seemed more like a bend in the trail and Mirror Rock was not what I had expected. You had to take a left off the trail and there it was... looking over the town. What a view, you could see the Quabbin tower and even the Holyoke Power Plant to the left and Mt. Tom. Where were Lissa and Beth? I know, I bet they're teasing us, playing hide-and-go-seek. We can find you, I hollered, but after about five or ten minutes which seemed much longer, it wasn't funny anymore. So with a very serious note in my voice, I cupped my mouth and yelled "Olli olli in free, come on in, we need to eat our snack and head on down." As I was saying the words, I realized between the wind and the rustling of the brittle dead leaves remaining on the trees, my voice was not carrying very far at all. I was beginning to feel panic, something was not right! Calm down Judie, anxiety won't help, and the boys will pick up on it!

"OK boys, we need to be a team, this is serious. Let's concentrate and yell together so that our voices will carry further." Mike and Bob were really great, we all sequenced together and hollered in every direction, paused for a response, and proceeded again. Nothing! Again guys, louder this time. Nothing. On the way up, we had come across several campfire remains (hunters?), both places were littered with beer cans and I remarked what poor sportsmen to leave this mess and to be drinking and hunting at the same time. We had heard distant gun shots, but because they were far away had not felt any danger. Now 40 minutes had gone by on the top of the mountain with no girls to be found. My imagination was out of control, it was about 3:20. One hour to get down off the mountain another hour to come back up with a search committee, IT WOULD BE DARK!! Real panic set in and tears of fear began. Did

drunken men abduct my beautiful girls? Or were they lying injured in some crevice? What to do??

"Michael, Bob, we have to get the police, we can't take a chance and continue the search without help. We'll yell once more together, as loud as we can. Before we do this, let's kneel down together, hold hands, and pray to God for His help." Without hesitation, we all sank to our knees..."Dear God..."

"OK, let's do it... as loud as our voices can stand... Lissa... Beth..." Pause... listen and again. "Wait, did you hear something? I'm not sure, again... what's that? A distant voice? Look, over there, between the trees, is there something moving?" We're running now, the branches are slapping us in the face, we're screaming... Lissa, Beth? It's them. Crying. We're running to meet each other. We're laughing.

"What happened, where did you go?"

"Mom, we just kept following the trail, we didn't know this was the top of the mountain. We were talking and before we realized, we were in this dark pine forest on the other side of the mountain and we were scared. We heard gunshots and weren't sure how to get back. We took a path and started back up the mountain. There were a few cutoffs that we had to retrace and then we heard you!"

I don't think there has been a time since, when I felt as close to all four children as I did on Mirror Rock. We all knelt and thanked God for His help and the courage He had given all of us to make the right decisions.

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# Joey, A Special Kid

Linda Hillenbrand

My life as the mother of a SPED kid began when my son, Joey, was 18 months old. The very first phone call came from Sue, his first home day care provider. A few months before, Joey's father had moved out; I was lucky to find a part-time job quickly and even luckier to find Sue. Joey was there only a few hours a day and he loved Sue and the other children. This particular phone call was to report that he had bitten another child. The hardest thing to hear was that there was no obvious reason for the biting.

I was bewildered at first, then ashamed, then concerned. What was wrong? Why did he do it?

For the next few months it appeared to be an isolated incident — until Sue became pregnant again and I needed to find a new day care provider. The center-based day care I found for him was a good and caring environment. He was 23 months old when he started. After the newness wore off the phone calls began. He had started to bite and kick his classmates. There were many days I had to pick him up early because the Director assumed that if he couldn't play, he would stop biting. I was against the idea because I knew that Joey wanted to come home and would continue the behavior if he knew I would be there.

There were many meetings and strategy sessions with all of his teachers, the Director, and his future teachers. Sometimes the plans worked, but mostly they didn't. It seemed that my very bright son was hip to whatever we tried to do.

He stayed in this day care for two years. When he was three, the aggression increased and was mostly centered around naptime. Bad language, violence and rage increased dramatically then. The teachers tried everything to help, but nothing worked. They were especially concerned when he approached a group of children playing. As if afraid of rejection he would walk up and kick one of the other children and later say they wouldn't have let him play anyway.

A transition in my job prompted me to start looking for day care in Amherst, where I intended to find a job closer to home and also to have Joey be with children he might possibly go to kindergarten with. I found a day care that would take him which would certify him for kindergarten if I chose. Shortly after I enrolled him I started my job at UMass. Joey was 4 at the time. The phone calls began after he was there for two weeks. He was hitting and kicking the teachers this time, as well as the children. After two months I was asked to take him out.

His final day care center was at UMass. The teachers were wonderful and understanding and they tried very hard to help. I didn't think it could get worse, but it did. The level of aggressiveness increased and because he was getting bigger it was becoming more dangerous for the children. Again, during naptime, he was threatening to set fire to children while they slept, calling the teachers vulgar names and sneaking up to children and kicking them awake during nap. At one point he threw a rock at a parent.

The spring before he began kindergarten I contacted the school he would be attending. I knew I'd have to set up some kind of program through the Special Education Office if he was going to make it in kindergarten. A SPED person came to the day care and helped them to implement a plan for Joey. They created a "safe area" for the day care, complete with pillow from home. They had it plexiglassed so he couldn't destroy or climb the walls, or break the window. He spent a lot of time there and it helped in some small ways.

The summer before Joey started kindergarten I took him out of the day care at UMass and signed him up for a summer camp. The SPED Director asked for and got a lot of information from me and, again, I thought it would work. I was wrong again. Perfect behavior for two weeks had them letting their guard down. I thought it might have been too good to be true that he'd have his very own counselor. They didn't believe that it was serious; and Joey's special "shadow" counselor was no longer his own and was integrated in with the rest of the counselors. That's when the trouble began. He started to kick, bite, hit and use vulgar language, until one day they called and said they couldn't meet his needs any longer. This was in mid-July and I found myself abruptly faced with finding someone to take care of Joey while I worked.

The very first week of kindergarten continued the impulsive and violent behavior. I was getting three phone calls a day after the first three weeks. He had been regularly visiting the "quiet room" as well as the principal and vice-principal. A good portion of his day was spent in this windowless "quiet room," alone. The few times I was asked to pick him up early I found him in this room eating his lunch. The crazed look in his eyes broke my heart and made me angry. The school didn't figure they had a choice, so voicing my anger felt pointless.

I had thought that when I set up the SPED program back in the spring that there wouldn't be a problem. Once again I was wrong. I didn't find out till recently that the plan stated he would only see a counselor for 15 minutes per week. The SPED person for his school frequently told me that she wasn't able to spend time with any of the other SPED children because of Joey.

One particular phone call came from the principal. He wanted to suspend Joey for 10 days. Convincing him that was a bad idea because of my single mother status was harder than it should have been, but he was allowed to stay. Joey was so stressed out that he welcomed the idea of suspension and it was difficult to get him on the bus.

Four weeks after kindergarten began, I enrolled him in a crisis intervention program at a local hospital. Getting to this point was

stressful and frustrating. There were many people involved: myself, his therapist, his teacher, his counselor, the principal and my health insurance carrier. The key person was Joey's therapist because he was the "professional." I made many phone calls to my insurance carrier trying to get a recommendation or even to find a psychiatrist for a medication evaluation. One was too busy to see Joey, another wanted to start with weekly sessions. Stressing that it was an emergency seemed to fall on deaf ears. Finally, Joey's therapist contacted the Director of Mental Health from my insurance carrier for the region and he said, thankfully, that whatever we could find he would approve. This was a relief, but we still needed to find a program. It had been suggested that Joey go into the hospital as an inpatient, but convincing me that was necessary didn't work. I wanted my son home. We finally found this intervention program and he was admitted immediately. It was six hours every day of intense therapy, group and otherwise, with a school portion. Curiously, the staff with this program saw none of the behavior that brought him there.

Joey eventually returned to his kindergarten class after five months. The hospital program was not a permanent one and it was important for him to try for some sort of a normal school life. The medication that has been prescribed for him helps him to focus and also to maintain control while he is in school. The school has hired an aide and also set up an alternative space, some place other than that terrible windowless room. It has also been suggested that they start some sort of therapy group, but that will take time. Not surprisingly, at least to me, my anxiety level has increased. The school has already shown they cannot manage him but since alternatives are nonexistent, we have no choice. My son, for the first time in his short life, was finally in a place where he could control his emotions and temper and where his self-esteem was being somewhat repaired. Myself and the staff at the program he was in have been optimistic with Joey about his returning to school, but he was nervous and scared and is convinced that if he's "bad" he can be sent back to the program. He misses the counselors from the program terribly and has drawn many pictures of himself crying.

Our home life during this time has been tempestuous. The combination of rage, anxiety and defiance inside my son was and still is frightening. With the help of a wonderful child psychologist, I've been able to help Joey control some of it by restraining him, but not all. Anyone who has seen me do it would think I'm cruel. If he hits me it's necessary to hold him down, because it only gets worse if he isn't able to rein it in. He's a big boy and when I restrain him I have to pin him down on his stomach, holding his arms behind him and laying my legs across his, so he can't kick me. His arms need to be held high up behind his back so he can't scratch me.

Trying to discover where and why this all began has been a main focus in my life. Laying blame anywhere is a futile effort and I discourage anyone who tries. What I see is a boy whose emotions are written all over him. The emotions he feels turn into rage; sadness because it hurts on the inside and with anger, because being an outside emotion it is easier to be angry. Happiness turns into rage

because it doesn't last and he feels he doesn't deserve it, and frustration because he has no coping techniques. Even his loving feelings turn to anger because he feels they aren't returned. He frequently cries if I'm angry or frustrated because he believes that anger turns off love.

When he lashes out with these feelings and hurts someone the remorse and guilt is almost too much for him. He will sometimes cry for an hour while I hold him, reassuring him that my feelings for him will never change no matter what he does. It's difficult to know what to say to your child when he announces he doesn't like himself.

As Joey's mom I've run through every emotion known. Most prominent though is a great sadness that I don't feel emotionally and intellectually equipped to provide him with what he needs. I've been setting aside my needs for a long, long time and it's affected me in physical and psychological ways. When I make an attempt to do something for myself, Joey reacts in a serious way. He withdraws from me completely, sometimes doing very deliberate and destructive things. Attempting to communicate with him about his behavior results in violence if I try to touch him. It could easily be compared to an erupting volcano and I feel lucky if the eruption takes the form of crying. These episodes last for three to four days and usually finish with a lot of crying and screaming. When it's over he is like a different child, and quite simply, I'm a mess.

For my peace of mind, I've taken steps to help myself. I've made more of an effort to do those things that make me feel more whole. Small steps do get you somewhere, it just takes time. Joey's problems have gotten smaller and will continue to get smaller as he gets older and more able to deal with them. He isn't violent with his peers any more and he is able to think more clearly about things that he does and says. Schoolwork comes easy for him and he is learning to read and write and this makes us both feel proud, thereby improving his self-esteem. Obviously, there will not be an end to Joey's and my story, but I can take heart that the issues become smaller as time goes on.

# Love is Too Precious

Janet Verrill

Love is too precious
to give it away
to one who can't love
in return.

The heart which is broken
can bandage its wounds
hide all its pain
from the world.

Wounds much too deep
to easily heal,
scar over
and over again.

Set your heart on a shelf.
Let emotions be numb.
Kill the joy
Which aches to be real.

Live in the shadows.
Bury the fear.
Learn the lies that
Your face always wears.

Don't waste your arms
with their caring embrace
as your love
is soon trampled again.

Maybe the pain
will fade through the years
and trust
will return to your soul.

Can you hope to dream?
Dare you think there'd be love?
What a fool!
To think such would come true.

What gives you the right?
How dare you assume
someone decent
could care much for you?

Loosen the bandages.
Set the wounds free.
Cleanse your heart
From its source of great pain.

Be a whole person.
Find the pieces
And mend.
To give your love fully again.

# Writing the Moment

## The End of My Mother's World

Claire Galenski Myette

I have to keep writing to change my mind. I'm starting to get sad again. Good, I'm starting to change my line of thought.

Today is Tuesday. Really only the beginning of the week. I wonder what the rest of the week has in store for me. Maybe I don't really want to know. Good or bad I will have to accept it. I should be getting used to it by now.

I guess I didn't change my line of thought. Tears are starting to sting my eyes.

I don't know why I want to write about my problems. Do you think it helps to make me stronger? I hope so.

I'm always too emotional. I don't want to be too emotional. I'd rather not show that side of me. It stops me from doing what I have to do. I need to be a leader; someone might need me.

My mother needs me now. Good-bye, my dear mother. I love you.

## Snow

Bruce Bass

I remember when we played in the snow when I was young.

Now I have to keep it cleaned off of everything.

After we finished, we were wet and happy.

Now sometimes I'm wet, cold, and bothered.

We watched for a while with blankets and smiles.

Now I try to get warm: it takes a while.

Through it all, I still live and breath hoping to play again.

"Hi," snow.

# How We put Walking on America's Map

Sophie Sidur

I don't know how many people know that the first week in May is National Walking Week.

How do I know about it? I found out by reading Prevention magazine. National Walking Week was approved by the Congress of the United States.

When people feel stressed and irritated, going for a walk is a good remedy. It makes a person feel great.

Walking is one of my favorite hobbies. Since winter was bad this year, I missed going for a walk. The only time I was able to go for a walk was coming to class or taking a short walk at lunch time. Now that spring is here, I'm looking forward once again to walking in the evening time. I meet lots of people on the streets who are walking now.

It's very important for people to get outdoors and walk for thirty minutes. I'm asking all of you to get outside to walk. It's good for your health and also whatever troubles you.

# My Brother Bill

Dave Hutchins

Dick Hutchins, Bill Hutchins, and David Hutchins, 1942

I got a call from my brother Bill's wife, Liz. She said, "Your brother is very sick. If you can see Bill, I think it will make him fight. He is giving up. He is in the hospital taking chemotherapy."

I said, "I'll be there soon as I can."

I told my supervisor about my brother. She said "Do what you have to."

I went to the travel agent at the Campus Center. A nice woman named Beverly was there. I told her my problem. She got on the phone and called some airlines. Bev booked my flight for the same day on the least expensive one, Delta. I was at work and had to be at the airport at 3:30 pm the same day. I went to Bradley Airport in Connecticut. From Bradley I went to Atlanta, Georgia; from Atlanta to Dothan, Alabama. Liz was waiting for me there. I asked her how Bill was, and Liz said that Bill was holding his own.

The next day we went to the hospital to see Bill. We arrived in the morning and stayed until Bill was released, which was about 4:00 pm, when the nurse took the needles out of Bill's arm. He got out of bed, got dressed, and said, "Let's go. I want out of here!" So off we went.

The next day we had to go back to the hospital because Bill had to take radiation treatment. So I drove Bill 40 miles back and forth to his house. We did this all the time I was there.

One day when I took Bill to the hospital I said to Bill, "I'm going to see your doctor." Bill said, "Go ahead."

While Bill was getting his treatment, I said to the nurse that I would like to see Bill's doctor. She said he would be in at 9:15 am. I said, "I'll wait for him." The nurse put me in a room and said the doctor would be in soon.

After a while the doctor came in the room. He said, "Yes, can I help you?"

I said, "I hope so." I asked the doctor about my brother Bill.

He said, "Your brother is a sick man. He has cancer. He has a tumor in the lower part of his rib cage. Your brother is going to die. It may be a month or a year, but he will die."

I was not happy to hear this.

The doctor said, "If your brother had quit smoking, he would not have this problem today. But he smoked after he was told to stop, so he has lung cancer. There's not a hell of a lot we can do."

So I asked myself, "Why do people smoke?" People know smoking will kill them after a while. If you do not believe me, ask a doctor; any doctor will tell you that smoking will kill you. I have seen people that have lung cancer. They suffer a lot. People will say that they are going to die anyhow, but this is not the way to die. I knew what my brother was in for. I love my brother.

**David and John**

Well, Bill, my dear brother, it's almost a year since you have been gone. Bill, I miss you. When you died, a part of me died too. I think of the times when I would call you on the telephone. You would say, "What are you doing, boy?" Then I would say, "How are ya?" It was like a joke to us. For we are country people, and this is the way we talk. Bill, I think of when we were kids; many memories come to me.

It was a good life back then, for we were kids and we knew all our neighbors. Bill, do you remember old Bill Morin? He lived across the brook in the big white house. Bill Morin had a Ford car. It was a Model T Ford. I think he was one of the first people to have a car in the town of Old Furnace, Massachusetts.

It was a small town, and everyone knew one another. Alice Banuse and her mother were our neighbors. I remember when Alice got married. Bill, you and I snuck down to her house and put a potato in the exhaust pipe of her car. When they went to start the

car, it would not start. Suddenly it started and made a hell of a noise. It scared the hell out of everyone. To this day Alice does not know who did it.

Bill, do you remember a kid by the name of Bill Miller? He was a good friend of mine. Bill Miller and I were swinging together. The rope broke, and we fell. I went through a wire fence, and Bill fell to the ground. He had fallen on an old axe blade. Bill looked at me. I was between two strands of barbed wire. Bill said, "I'll help you off the wire."

I said, "OK." He helped me, then I looked at Bill's arm. He had a big cut on his arm. It looked like the muscle was showing. I said, "Bill, your arm, you have a cut!" He looked and started to cry, then started to run home. I tried to calm Bill down, but I could not, for he was scared. His mother and father took him to the doctor. Bill had to have some stitches. Bill Miller had a scar on his left arm, and I had a scar on my back; but we were OK.

Another day I went to see my friend, Bill Miller. His father's motorcycle was outside on the grass. I went over to the bike. It was an Indian bike. I wanted to get on it so I started to climb on the bike. It fell on me. I could not get up. Bill's father came running out and picked the bike up. He said, "It could have killed you, David. Are you OK?" I said that yes, I was OK. I was told to stay away from the bike after that.

Bill, what about the time you bought a bicycle from Charlie Dayhart and you rode it with no tires, just the rims. It used to make so much noise; but Bill, you were happy with it.

Do you remember Red Prouty? He lived in an old shack out the road from us. His shack was built so the sun would shine in the kitchen and heat the camp. Back then, Red was thinking about solar heat. One day, Red and I were talking about frogs. He said, "David, if you find some frogs, bring them to me and we will have frog legs.

I looked at him and said, "Frog legs?"

Red said, "Yes, they're very good to eat." The next day I went looking for frogs, and I found two of them... big bull frogs. I brought them to Red. "These are good ones," he said. He cut the legs off and fried them. I ate with Red that day. The frog legs were great. Red was a very good friend to all of us boys. We used to visit Red a lot.

Bill, do you remember when you and some of your friends went swimming up to Moose Brook, and one of your friends had a camera. He took a picture of you and your friends with no clothes on. After a while your friend showed the picture to some girls. Bill, you were so mad!

**Bill and John**

**Dick, Bill, and David, Furnace, MA**

Bill, do you remember when Uncle Bill was wounded in World War II? Uncle Bill did not talk much about this. Everyone that was with him was killed; and when they found Uncle Bill, he was half dead. They said he crawled for miles before anyone found him. Then Uncle Bill came home. He made leather wallets for you, Bill, and for our oldest brother, Dick. He said he was working on mine, but I did not get my wallet. This did hurt me because you two got a gift and I didn't get one. Uncle Bill didn't care too much for me. I don't know why.

Remember the Labells that lived up the street? They had three kids. Across from them lived their grandmother and an uncle. One day, we went up there. We took some apples from their tree, and they told our father about it. We had to pick a bushel of apples, and our father had to pay for them. Our mother was mad about this. She said, "They're just kids." Our dad said, "This will teach them a lesson."

How about the time we were caught smoking? Bill, you and our brother Dick had to smoke a cigar and then go to bed. I just had to go to bed because I was the youngest one. Our parents thought that Dick and Bill should have known better. Now that I think of it, I should have had to smoke the cigar too.

Bill, how about the time we lived in Barre, Massachusetts and you were going out with Evelyn Drag. Bill, it was around Christmas time, and you and Evelyn gave me a tie clip and cufflinks. They had three knights on them. I still have that gift that the two of you gave me.

That farm in Barre was quite the place. There was always someone coming and going. But Bill, you had a problem then, too. It was drinking. That is why Evelyn left you, and we both knew this.

Bill, do you remember when it snowed about a foot. The road going to the farm was drifted bad. You were driving down the hill, when I was driving up. But, Bill, there was not room for two cars. So rather than run into you, I went off the road onto a stone wall. Bill, you started to laugh at me. There I was... hung up on a stone wall. You said, "What are you doing up there?"

I said, "I had to go somewhere! You took up the whole road."

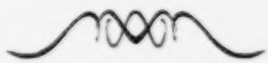
You said to me, "I hope you're all right."

I said, "Yes, and I just have to get this damn car off the wall."

"Now Dave," you said, "try to back it up."

"OK, I'll try."

Sure enough, the car backed off the stone wall. I was lucky it didn't do much damage.



Bill, remember how our youngest brother, John, loved that farm in Barre? It was everything to John. When Dad and Mother broke up and were divorced, that hurt John a lot. John was just thirteen years old, and he didn't understand what it was all about. But since then he has gone through three divorces; I think he understands now.

My dear brother, do you remember when I was hunting at John's home in Vermont in 1985 and I shot a spiked buck? John had you get the tractor to pull the buck back to the farmhouse. I was on the mountain. Bill, you and John were coming up the mountain on the tractor. What a sight it was, my two brothers coming to get my deer. It was something, Bill!

Bill, do you remember about ten years ago when you were at John's home in Vermont. You lived there for quite a time before you moved to Florida. Bill, you did some painting at John's. You painted around the windows in the barn and some windows of the house. Well, Bill, that paint is still there. John and I were cleaning out the cellar, and we came across some old paint cans. I said to John, "Do you want to throw this paint can away?"

John looked at me and said, "No, don't throw the can away." This was the paint can that you used, Bill; and John did not want to throw it away.

Bill, did you know that your two grandchildren died? They drowned, Bill; one was four years old and the other was nine. I don't know if you know this. I just found out from a cousin. So Bill, I guess they're with you.

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*Note from the author:* Now I have another brother who is sick. First it was Bill; he was 57 years old when he got cancer. Now, John has cancer at 52 years. My brothers were hard workers. Bill did not have a chance to retire. I do hope that John gets well and can retire. My Dad was 64 years old when he died; Dad did not retire. I love my brothers.

# Ordinary and Wild Panic

Eugenie Harvey

In my dreams before I meet you
Snow clings to my face, mist caresses
my hair, haze dampens my eyes, dust
falls all around and dies. Clothes
(oddly enough) strewn all about, clothes
in the washing machine twirling in doubt.
Oh Jesus the suds are starting to come out!
besides, I am dead, bleeding from without
"And the icy grave of our father!"
I would like to shout. (Alas, I'm dead.)

You enmeshed in my patented cells. No
exorcism, correct-o-vision, no expunge-o-
jectile, wild panic! You, steel, reflect
white gold; I steal, reflect, grow old.
Steel is always so-objective. My thievery
lights up moonsunstars, opens the sky,
hangs out laundry on mars, crosses
icy snow without falling to the bottomless
begin. You are always so goddam
incorrect, cleansed of sin. I, the light
correct, the dark wind.

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# Poems from Shatterland

Eugenie Harvey

### *Funny Bone*

Or, the Madness of King George
or, the look in your bone
Catch, this moment of life,
this moment of life
oh the man in the mood
how he mandates the moon
man dates the moon, I
drink milk like a nun
sometimes I suck my thumb
All the madness will go
we'll be left don't you know
clawless monkeys, boneless
dogs.

### *Badwaggled*

I was lost in a miasma
I was completely and utterly
lost in a miasma I was
completely and utterly lost
in a miasma I was completely
and utterly lost I'm telling you
utterly lost I was completely
totally and utterly I was lost
beaten bedraggled and forlorn
badwaggled I was and lost
I was gone!

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# Battle at Cam Le Bridge - 23 August 1968

Lee Forester

I had been "in country" for two weeks, and after the initial culture shock had subsided, I was beginning to get used to the "smell" of this new environment, the foreign noises, and the Vietnamese people. An older redheaded Sergeant explained to me and a few other "new" Marines what was expected of us for the next year ahead. Basically, our Company's mission was to guard the southern perimeter of the Danang Air Base and a single-span concrete bridge on Highway One about six-thousand meters south of the airbase. This bridge was built by the French during their occupation after World War II.

He went on to explain that the enemy had attacked all around the Danang area during the TET Offensive of 1968, six months earlier, but was unable to get to the bridge and airbase. We would be running constant security patrols, night ambushes, and other small operations throughout the low lands of rice paddies and small villages that dotted the landscape around the Cam Le Bridge, as it was called.

A few of us who had not been assigned to a platoon were told to stay back in the "rear," but to stay put, as intelligence reports stated that there was a strong possibility of enemy activity in our area. This possibility turned out to be a reality a few hours later when we were told to get our gear on, and draw extra ammo along with our weapons. We were going out to the bridge to join up with an ambush team which was already there and getting ready to move to their ambush site.

It was a quiet ride through the gate of the base into Hoa Vang, a village on the north side of the bridge. The sun had just set as we all boarded a skimmer boat which took us to an island called Con Noi where we settled into a small cemetery behind a stone wall located at the end of the island nearest the bridge.

As darkness settled in, I felt alone and nervous out on this dark deserted island — six of us and the spirits of the dead.

Unknown to me and the others laying here in the dark at this moment, about four miles south a Marine squad from Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 27 Marines had a contact with a small group of armed Vietnamese soldiers, rarely seen in the area during recent months. Their sudden appearance, combined with some interesting documents showed that "something big was in the air".

Around 0200 hours, things began to heat up all around our position and the

Cam Le Bridge, southwest of Danang, South Vietnam, 1969.

Machine gun on top of the original French bunker.

bridge near by. Danang Air Base and Danang City to our north began to receive numerous rockets. We could hear the explosions and watched as the night sky lit up from these explosions. We later learned that the elements of the 402nd Viet Cong Sapper Battalion and the 38th North Vietnamese Regiment had begun a series of attacks throughout the area south of Danang. Mortar and rocket fire were followed up by Sappers, laden with high explosives, attacking places such as "Fort Apache", "Tugboat", "Crow's Nest", and "Ha Dong". The enemy who attacked those bases had only one mission; pin down and destroy the allies in these bases while the main force sprinted for Da Nang. These Sappers did not come with any thoughts beyond this night, for they knew there would be no tomorrow for most of them.

Rebuilt French bunker at the bridge.

Their route to Danang City was to take them across the Cam Le Bridge, by the Air Base, and into the heart of the city. Once inside, they planned to mingle with the 300,000 civilian residents, forcing the allies to fight their way from house to house, inflicting heavy casualties, as had happened in Hue City six months earlier. The target date was already set, and now they were making their way towards Da Nang City.

Things begin to heat up in our area as Marble Mountain to our immediate south was being hit by rocket fire and a ground attack. We watched the sky light up again as mortar rounds were being "walked in" towards the towers at both ends of the bridge. At the southern end of the bridge, groups of Sappers and North Vietnamese soldiers rushed towards the old French bunker and tower area. A Marine manning the .50 cal. machine gun tried to swing the weapon around to fire upon the attackers and realized why the gun would not transverse any further, a pair of hands were holding the barrel from moving, as other Viet Cong Sappers began climbing upon the bunker. The enemy had pitted everything on seizing this vital bridge; and human waves rushed towards it and other fighting positions.

A five-man listening post found themselves surrounded and fought their way across the bridge with four wounded in the process. The fifth Marine covered their withdrawal with an M-60 machine gun. The last time this Marine was seen alive, he was standing on the road in the smoke filled night air, firing his machine gun at the approaching enemy. We were to find his body three days later as we were on a patrol along the river bank. He had been captured and shot.

As the red sun began to rise into the early morning sky, we were able to spot the Marine

who had been on the French bunker that had been overrun. He had been shot in the leg and was trying to wade across the river towards our position. Three of us went across and helped him back. The radioman was able to call in a medivac helicopter to pick him up.

As the morning became brighter, we began to receive small arms fire onto our position. It seemed as though we were being fired upon by both the enemy and our own people who didn't know who we were. We were glad to be behind the small stone wall in the small cemetery.

In the village of Hoa Vang on the north side of the bridge, things were critical. The enemy had infiltrated amongst the dwellings within the village and attacked the district headquarters compound. Government officials, ARVN soldiers, National Police, and American advisors fought side by side against the Viet Cong.

Despite the early morning hour, the temperature was climbing. It would reach 130 degrees F. before the day ended! Between the fear and the heat, I realized that I had consumed all of my water. I crawled down to the river's edge to fill a canteen. A second later a shot rang out and a round snapped in front of my forehead. I decided then to remain thirsty and scrambled back over the wall then watched my empty canteen float lazily down the river.

Civilians were fleeing the fighting to the south and tried to make their way towards the bridge and Hoa Vang, which they thought would be secure. Many were cut down before they could get to the bridge. The enemy there were firing at anything that moved. By 0800, Highway One leading to the bridge was a strip of burning, destroyed vehicles and dying civilians.

The Viet Cong had now gained control of the southern side of the bridge with Marines controlling the north end. We watched as red tracers were fired across the bridge while both M-60 machine gun positions in the towers were firing towards one another.

We had been firing at the enemy whenever they showed themselves. They were waving the Viet Cong flag around to taunt us. Some North Vietnamese tried to get onto the bridge from behind the tower and were killed instantly. We spotted a small group of enemy soldiers running into a brick dwelling alongside the river. This dwelling disappeared a few minutes later as a 500 lb. bomb was dropped upon it by a Marine F-4 Phantom Jet.

A short while later another jet screamed across the river and dropped Napalm upon the French bunker and tower area. Flames and black smoke shot upward into the sky. Once the smoke had cleared, we could again see the Viet Cong flag being waved around. Evidently, the enemy were able to get down inside the thick-walled concrete bunker only to pop back up after the bomb had been dropped. A Huey helicopter gunship then made a pass towards the bunker with its rockets hitting the water short of the target. The enemy soldiers were firing the .50 cal. machine gun at the Huey, and it flew off.

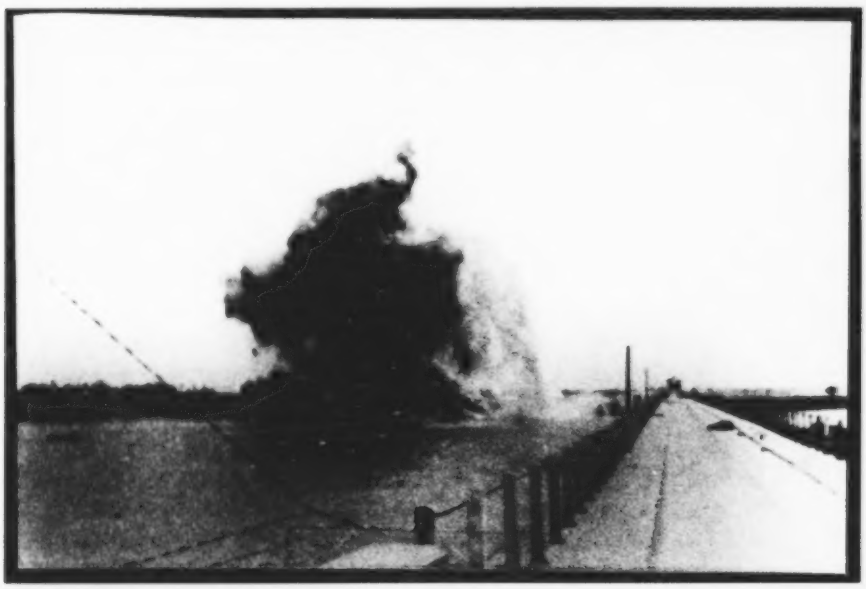
Along with the elements of the 27th Marines, three tanks from Bravo Company, 5th Tank Battalion were brought up from the south. After receiving heavy fire from the bunker and the villages on the flanks of Highway One, the tanks were able to score direct hits upon the bunker. We would find twenty enemy dead both inside and around the bunker along with the twisted and destroyed .50 cal machine gun.

After we had crossed the river, we also spotted a small group of South Vietnamese soldiers who had been trapped in the rice paddies. They came towards us with outstretched arms so they would not be shot.

Fighting was continuing in the villages to our south and north, but now the bridge was back in our hands. Myself and another new Marine were told to be security for some explosive ordinance detail. Marines as they tried to disarm a 500 lb. bomb that had left a trail through the rice paddies, but failed to explode. We both kept on looking behind our backs wide-eyed as these older Marines worked on disarming the warhead of this bomb. We later found numerous weapons,

explosive charges, and dead strewn about the rice paddies near the bridge.

A short while later, we made our way north through Hoa Vang up to the gate to the air base, where we found more bodies, some within one hundred meters of the base. We met up with my new platoon and our company got on line before we began to sweep back south through the village and to the river.



500 lb. bomb dropping on small brick factory.

Until this hot day in August, I had never before seen so much death and destruction. Between the heat and the smell of the dead, I became ill and had to sit down for awhile. An old mamason went to a well and pulled up a bucket of cool water and began to pour it over me. I thanked her the best I could and caught up with the rest of the platoon who were searching hootches and bunkers for the enemy. Another Marine and I went into one Vietnamese family bunker. I shined a light on a dead Viet Cong who had crawled inside and died of his wounds. We discovered more enemy and civilian bodies along trails and inside hootches. There were some enemy dead hanging from trees which they had tied themselves into. We walked by the body of one old papason who was laying dead upon a table in his yard. He looked as though he was peacefully sleeping through all that was going on around him.

We were waiting on a trail for the others to catch up when we heard someone yell "Chou Hoi! Chou Hoi!!" ("I surrender! I surrender!") We turned around and standing not more than twenty feet away was a malnourished Vietnamese with a grin on his face. He had a bandage on his knee, a bag of rice in one hand, and a 9mm pistol in the other. We hadn't spotted him earlier in a small pagoda (shrine) we had just passed.

I grabbed his weapon and we were told to take him down the trail towards the command post on the northside of the bridge. Once we arrived, I put an empty sand bag over his head and watched as he was placed in the back seat of the Jeep and taken to the rear for questioning. We heard that he was a North Vietnamese officer who was tired of fighting and wanted to surrender.

The battle of Cam Le Bridge was over. In this three-day engagement, the 38th North Vietnamese Regiment had lost over three hundred men and had been stopped short of its goal. Immediately after this action, all references to the 38th North Vietnamese Regiment disappeared from North Vietnamese records and messages. It was no more.

After this battle, I was permanently assigned to a platoon and continued my tour of duty. I made friends, and I lost friends. It was an experience that I will never forget, nor would I want to.

# Desert Storm - 1991

Lee Forester

It was just after midnight, New Year's Eve, 1991 and we were about to land at Al Juball Airfield in Saudi Arabia. Our Marine Corps Reserve Infantry Battalion had been called up for active duty one month prior and now we had arrived; "Happy New Year!" After loading our seabags onto trucks, we prepared to board buses for our trip north along the coast of the Persian Gulf. It was dawn and we had to wait as our Saudi bus drivers gathered their rolled-up prayer mats and spread them upon the desert sand for their daily prayers.

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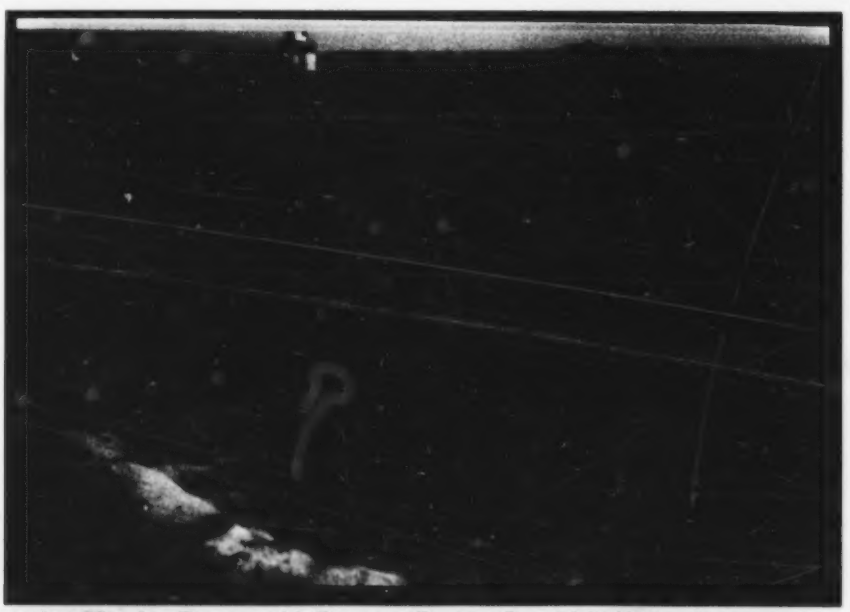
I was tired after our long journey, but could not rest as I sat behind this bus driver, a complete stranger to me, dressed in a robe, talking a strange language, and staring at us with deep dark eyes as we boarded our bus earlier. As we moved north, I remember being uneasy as we passed signs letting us know that Kuwait was straight ahead on this same highway. I felt a bit better knowing that I had live rounds in the magazine of my M-16 rifle laying across my lap.

We went up to an area near Manifa Bay and settled into a large area of desert covered with large general purpose tents that would become our home for the next few weeks. It was here that we would prepare for the war. After getting settled in, we began to fill sandbags that would line the dirt walls of the deep holes located at the end of our tents. We had dug these holes as a place to go in the event of Scud missile attack.

We began to familiarize ourselves with the desert environment and ran patrols on a constant basis along the coast. It was here that the young Marines in my platoon become proficient in land navigation and patrolling during both day and night. We became accustomed to living in the desert here and were eagerly awaiting the word that Saddam Hussain would be pulling out of Kuwait. No word would be forthcoming.



**Author SSgt. Lee Forester with Company Gunnery Sgt. at Manifa Bay Basecamp (DSA).**

A week or so prior to the beginning of the air campaign in January, we had been moved north to an area about three miles south of the border with Kuwait. We got off of the vehicles during the middle of a wet, dark night sky, and as soon as we began to dig in, a terrible lightning storm approached us. We dug into the water soaked desert as fast as we could. Lightning bolts were filling the night sky as we got into our fighting holes and covered ourselves with ponchos. As I tried to get some sleep, the sand and mud began to slide into the hole bringing back memories of Vietnam some twenty-three years earlier.

As daybreak approached, we packed up our wet gear and moved a few kilometers across the desert. At a designated area, we formed another perimeter defense and began to dig in while our gear dried out.

While here, it would be a continuum of patrolling and classes. One could now sense the urgency in training as there was an increased military presence in this area, with helicopters and other aircraft in the air daily. We had an artillery unit dug in not too far from our company's perimeter for a few days before moving up closer to the border. During the night, we would look up into the starlit sky and watch the strobe lights on allied aircraft as they flew north across the border on their bombing missions. From our positions, we could hear explosions and watch the horizon light up from these explosions. The night sky reminded me of a busy freeway amongst the stars.

One night, approximately twenty Iraqi tanks crossed the border into Saudi Arabia and were headed in our direction. It was the same night that they had units also crossing the border and into the city of Kafji.

We felt pretty defenseless sitting out there in the dark desert wondering if these tanks would reach our area. At first, the word was passed on down that we were to get ready for a possible night extraction by helicopters. A short while later our first sergeant and company gunnery sergeant drove up to my platoon's positions and dropped off cases of M-72 Laww antitank rocket launchers, hand grenades, and extra rounds for our dragon teams. We got the message and began to dig in a little deeper after passing out this added inventory of explosives, all the while thinking that our lone infantry company would be nothing but "speed-bumps" in the desert, should these tanks come upon us.

About five or six kilometers north of us a Marine Light Armored Infantry Force intercepted the enemy tanks, and engaged them. All we could do was watch and wait as this battle unfolded out in front of us. Two Air Force A-10 antitank aircraft came on station and engaged the tanks. Tracers were bouncing off the desert floor and the horizon was glowing red from the burning enemy tanks. In a few hours, the battle ended with many tanks destroyed and others escaping back across the border into Kuwait.

At daybreak, a squad from my platoon went up north to where this battle took place to pick up Iraqi survivors of the previous night's battle. It was there that these young Marines witnessed the carnage of battle when they saw a destroyed LAV (Light Armor Vehicle) amongst the Iraqi tanks that had also been destroyed.

**Awaiting the word to move across the desert to the south of the Kuwait border.**

Alongside the burnt hull of this vehicle lay the poncho covered bodies of the eight Marines who had been in battle just hours before.

These eight young Marines had been killed by friendly fire (antitank fire) from an American A-10 aircraft that had been involved with the battle on that fateful night. The few Iraqi survivors that they brought back that morning were tired, frightened, and hungry.

On 22 February, we moved further north towards the border and during the early morning hours of 23 February, ourselves and the rest of the 1st Marine Division, crossed over the border and into Kuwait. I will always remember the sights, smells, and sounds as we crossed the mine fields and into the burning oil fields. I felt as if we were going into hell itself, as dawn approached.

While crossing the Al-Bergan oilfields which were burning furiously, our ears were filled with the deafening roar from these fires. The morning sky was filled with bright orange fire and pitch black smoke that could be seen for miles. There were burning and destroyed Iraqi tanks strewn across the desert, and hundreds of Iraqi soldiers walking towards us in both small and large groups waving white rags above their heads. A large roar startled us, as a Cobra helicopter above fired a tow missile at an Iraqi tank sitting out in the desert a few hundred meters to our left flank. There was a loud explosion as the tank was hit and secondary explosions filled the air as the turret of the tank lifted and buckled over, flames overtaking the destroyed hull.

With the large volume of Iraqi soldiers approaching us, word was passed for our company to stay where we were and gather up the EPW. Next came the task of searching and separating soldiers of this demoralized army. We continued to bring in many more Iraqis throughout our first night on Kuwaiti soil. Nightfall would arrive, as pitch dark as the oily mist that began to fall. As we had no wire to help contain the hundreds of Iraqi soldiers, we depended upon the motivated young Marines to keep control over the prisoners. We had to call in a medivac helicopter before nightfall to pick up some badly wounded Iraqis as we felt they would not survive the long night. By the time the helicopter arrived, one of the Iraqis had died from his wounds.

At daybreak, my platoon was chosen to search an area of trenches and bunkers in our area. It seemed that some Iraqi officers refused to surrender along with the others, and according to one of the EPW who spoke English, these officers were probably hiding in this area of the desert. We were unable to find any Iraqis in these well camouflaged positions, but did find some important maps of the area along with some weapons and communication gear. We were also able to find some bags of rice in one of the bunkers. This rice would come in handy as these EPW were starving and we had no extra food except for our MREs. We were able to build fires and boil the rice. It was time consuming, but we were able to give each one cup of rice. We would put them into groups of ten and with their rice, they were able to share a bottle of water, amongst their group. It was not much, but we did not hear any complaints from them. A while later, Marine Military Police arrived and began to load this large group of EPW on vehicles for transport back to Saudi Arabia.

We began to move north again and ended up at a military airfield, a few miles southwest of Kuwait call El Al Jabar where we encountered more Iraqi soldiers ready to surrender. We had to stop again and gather them up. We were able to find a fenced-in compound, at this severely damaged airfield, to hold them in. While here, we continued to search bunkers and buildings for any "stragglers". We located numerous explosives and small arms weapons including a brand

new AK-47 assault rifle I found underneath the mattress of a bunk bed in one of the underground bunkers. We also found a ZSU heavy machine gun on wheels and an Iraqi BMP troop carrier hidden in one bomb damaged building on this base.

It was at this airbase that we really were able to take in the magnitude of damage caused by allied air strikes that had taken place weeks earlier. Besides the bomb damage, we were awestruck at the amount of looting that had taken place. There were numerous civilian vehicles in a parking lot at this base that had been stripped bare of anything of value. The Iraqis had even taken the plumbing fixtures and piping from the buildings. Anything of value had been loaded up and taken across the border into Iraq. So much for a disciplined army!

While here, we received word of a cease fire being in effect. Even though this day would be pitch black and filled with an oil coated rainfall, there were smiles all around. The remaining EPW were taken back south and picked up by the military police while the rest of us got ready to move again.

At daybreak, we found ourselves on a convoy heading towards the coast and Kuwait City. As we approached the city, we began to notice more destroyed civilian vehicles and tanks, all burnt and destroyed.

We also encountered many civilians driving alongside our convoy, waving small flags, and cars with horns blaring. I became nervous with this sudden attention, commotion, and the fact that we were on a highway with buildings on both sides of the road. I enjoyed watching the young Marines responses and expressions to this outpouring of gratitude from the Kuwaiti people; but I did tell them to be alert and to be watching the rooftops and windows for any trouble. Luckily, it was a pleasant and heartwarming feeling for what we encountered in Kuwait City.

Another highlight of our trip through the city was the fact that a 5-ton truck in front of us was loaded with cases of MREs (Meals Ready to Eat). Since we hadn't been eating too well, we managed to acquire a few extra cases of MREs each time the convoy would stop. We managed to lighten the load of that vehicle immensely before arriving back across the border into Saudi Arabia, and we managed to eat more on this trip than we had eaten for the whole one-hundred hour war!

After spending a few more weeks back at our base camp in Manifa Bay, Saudi Arabia Alpha Company, 25th Marines returned home to our loved ones, and a homecoming that we will never forget.

# The Knight in Shining Armor

Janet Verrill

Does the Knight in Shining Armor
Always ride upon a steed
To rescue the fair maiden
Satisfy her every need

Whisk her off to distant places
to his mansion by the shore
Where they'll always be together
Happy after ever more?

Could the Knight in Shining Armor
Be a friend in whom you trust
One who listens to your troubles
Picks you up out of the dust

Someone who gives you shelter
Brings you clothing, buys you food
Would help to solve your problems
If he really thought he could?

Lends the arms you need to hold you
Gives you strength so you won't fall
Offers shoulders good to cry on
Seems to understand it all?

Is the Knight in Shining Armor
Standing close outside the door
Ever present when you call
No matter what you need him for

One who'll hold the light before you
As you find your needs and wants
The one you always lean on
A real friend, your confidant?

Yes, the Knight in Shining Armor
Helps you make it through the day
When your troubles overwhelm you
And you want to run away

Helps you mend the bumps and bruises
Ease the pain so scars may heal
Truly cares just how you're doing
If you're lonely, how you feel

Holds your hand if you are frightened
Helps to wipe away your tears
Your burdens helps to lighten
Offers comfort, softens fears

It doesn't take a mansion
Or a castle by the shore
But a simple act of kindness
Can make life worth fighting for

That gentle caring nature
Compassion showered day to day
From the Knight in Shining Armor
A true friendship here to stay

# The Nineties Princess *(Faith)*

Janet Verrill

My princess of the nineties
Not a damsel in distress.
Within the castle wall
A desperate search for happiness.

An independent lady
Trying always to be strong.
Searching far across the ocean
In an effort to belong.

Feeling happy, feeling sorrow
Needing friendship, needing love
Sometimes lonely, ever wanted
Such a blessing from above.

My princess of the nineties
A beautiful treasured prize
Bringing happiness to others.
Enriching all our lives.

Her smile will make you happy.
Her laughter fills the room.
Eyes that always sparkle
Chase away each air of gloom.

My princess of the nineties
Learning cultures from afar
Making friends, creating memories
Has become my shining star.

She works so hard to learn
Words of wisdom all will teach
To find the path she'll follow
Grasp each dream within her reach.

Perhaps she'll be a famous actress
With such presence on the stage
Dance her way into your heart
Be part of the latest rage.

Maybe be a writer
Sharing words she yearns to say
Helping those who may be frightened
Find their paths to brighter days.

My princess of the nineties
Stands within the castle walls
Sharing what she's learned with others
As she strives to live it all.

With a heart as big as sunshine
Arms encircling as you near.
A grand privilege to know her
Growing dearer year to year.

# 2 Stories

Francis Martin, Jr.

## The Snag of the Century

We played in one of those industrial leagues that was in vogue in the baseball world before that advent of daily baseball games on TV. Several of us were "ringers" brought in to give the local team a boost in talent. It didn't always work out that way, but that was the intent.

This story isn't about the "ringers", but about a no-talent bench jockey, who we call Geezle. To this day, I can't remember his real name. I do, however, remember the miracle of which I was part.

Our team had gnawed, scratched and outlasted the best of the worst in the playoffs. In that last championship game of the season, the unpredictable, the stomach-wrenching sudden reality that we had only nine players hit home. Our empty bench suddenly struck fear in the regulars who showed that day. One look at second base and we all realized that Hell would have its day at our expense. Geezle was playing second. The opening play of the game was a vicious scorcher that hopped and buzzed and poured through Geezle's glove like melted butter. "Crap! Of all the people to put on second!" I thought from the outfield. Then, a long fly ball to deep right center. Already on the run, I caught it, wheeled around and whistled the ball to second. The runner had tagged and slid into second, upsetting Geezle and the ball. "Saaaaaaffe!" snorted the umpire. "Double, double crap," I whispered to myself.

Then a single to left and the runner was on third. A steal and a muff at second on the catcher's throw with Geezle looking at his glove like there was a giant hole in it. The pressure on him was enormous. Next, a double play ball to Geezle, a fumble, a late throw that missed the runner at second. He was already there, resting. Somehow, we got out of the inning with the other team riding on a cushion of runs not well-earned, like a gift from some Magi who didn't like us.

On through the game we plodded, losing runs, getting them back. Getting behind again, Geezle only showed us a different way to boot the ball or throw late, too low, too high. He and we weren't happy. The kids who always loafed near the bench would usually take him, "Where ya playing today, Geezle?" He'd answer, "End and Guard! " And they'd laugh. "Ya!" one would say, "End of the bench and guard of the water bucket!" But, today they attended a crucifixion. It was Geezle's turn on the cross and the rest of us were unwilling witnesses.

This agonizing game went to the first of the ninth inning with bases loaded, Geezle struck out, for the third time. Then an error and we were one up. We got two runners. One on a grounder to short and another on a long fly ball. "One more out and we win," I hoped to myself and then yelled the same. But, fate turned the screw one more agonizing turn. Geezle fumbled again, pulled himself together, got ready for the next batter, got a sharp grounder in the chest and two men were safe. The next walked. Then I looked at reality. I saw Geezle standing at second waiting for the inevitable. "After this one, he'll be like a skunk at a lawn party," I said to myself.

I watched the batter who looked at second and I thought "he's going to drive it through second."

The pitcher threw an outside pitch and then the deafening sound of a bat making excellent contact with the ball thundered through the park. I screeched toward shallow right. The ball was a line drive between first and second and was fast growing legs. Like a fire cracker that is lit, but doesn't first go off, Geezle froze for a split second, looked, exploded, shot to deep second base, left his feet and catapulted in an enormous climb and drove his glove up to meet the ball and caught it! Dead silence and awe! Then the fans flooded the field and picked up Geezle. I stood and couldn't believe what I had just seen. I can still see that six foot-four bony frame — Icabod Crane in an ill-fitting uniform — who suddenly decided that he had enough of Braun Bones and fought back and won. Afterwards, in the bar where we celebrated, someone asked Geezle, "Tell everyone here about the catch you made Geezle," He just grinned and said, "No, you tell 'em. I wasn't watching!"

# Everything He Knew

"Chappie" was in his late fifties and had white hair. He wore wire-rimmed glasses and had a nose with no bone in it. He could move his nose anywhere in a circle and touch his face with it. He was short and quick and a hard worker. In his youth, he had fought under the name of "Kid" Chaplin. He was a closemouthed person, but one day he told me about his boxing career. I even saw the posters, mostly from arenas throughout New England. He had fought 175 professional fights without a loss. None were in the big time at Madison Square Garden, but I was sure that the "Kid" knew his craft. He had fought as a lightweight and in his prime probably struck like King Cobra. The faraway look in his grey eyes when he talked about the fight game told me that he was good and loved every minute of it.

He mimicked his moves in the ring, up on the balls of his feet, moving lightly in and out. His fists were like lightening and he moved like a calculating catamount, smoothly, but surely. His fists were still dangerous weapons, but he was a kind and gentle man.

One time, when a young man in the factory where we worked, taunted him and told him that he could easily take him in a fight, "Chappie" confided that he was tired of taking the abuse. I said, "Why don't you put on an exhibition. Put him through the paces and give him a lesson. He thinks you're a marshmallow. He doesn't know that you were a boxer and nobody else here knows that."

The other workers egged the young man on. "You can take that guy hands down!" "What are you a pansy?" "Show him what you're made of!" Finally, I said to the young man, "How about you fight Chappie with boxing gloves, in the steel shed where everyone can watch. You can show all these guys how tough you really are!" "Okay," he said, "But I don't want to hurt him!" "Don't worry," I said, "We'll stop it before you get too far."

I told Chappie what had happened and Friday was set for the big bout. "Don't hurt him, Chap, just toy with him." We lined up the gloves and the equipment for a temporary ring and everyone waited for the big day.

The entire company was there to watch. The younger man was hyper, bouncing and swinging at the air and twirling as he went, copying the pre-fight dance of the pros. His movements were jerky, and his body soft. Just from the warm-up dance, his chest was a mottled red, and his face matched. His chest was heaving just from ten minutes of exercise. "Chappie" was coolly moving in place, disguising his quickness. His bare top revealed a frame still lean and muscular, wiry and potent.

The bell rang, and the young man lunged at the "Kid" with a round-house swing that missed by two feet. The "Kid" danced in and out parrying the younger man's' fruitless punches. First he gave him a target, then pulled it away, bobbing and weaving, leaving only a shadow to hit. The young man was swinging even more wildly now, shuffling his tired legs and wheezing, the oxygen spent in his flabby body. The "Kid" was up on the balls of his feet now, blocking punches, faking jabs at the young man's face or body. He purposely baited the young man now, inviting punches. Not one hit him. Now Chappie began dancing around him, swinging his right hand in a threatening circular motion as if he was going to slam him at any time. The tired younger pugilist began to get a weary, scared look, like a trapped wild animal, exhausted from the hunt.

The "Kid" began shadow boxing in front of him, his fists swinging so fast they were blurs. The young man began to back away. Repeatedly the older "Kid" backed him into a corner, but never swung to hit him. The "Kid" blocked the last of the tired swings, and into the ring flew a white towel from the young man's corner. The "Kid" had fought his 176th fight without giving or receiving a punch. The room was deadly quiet. A craftsman had just shown us his wares. No one there would ever think of challenging the "Kid" again.

In the days that followed, the "Kid" was engaged with the new respect by workers passing the assembly floor where he worked. Now a part of the establishment at work because of his fame as a pugilist, "Chappie" had a new look about him. He smiled often and was more open to everyone. His nephew was learning the secrets of assembling presses from him. He had, actually, been learning for two years.

With new-found interest, a fellow worker asked the "Kid," "How's your nephew doing?" "I don't really know how he is doing. He seems to be learning awfully slow," said the Kid. "I've taught him everything I know and he still doesn't know anything!"

Although the "Kid's" nephew may have taken forever to learn how to assemble presses, the rest of us had learned what he had to teach us in short order, especially his opponent in the ring.

# Dialogue

## You, Me, I See

Bruce Bass

Sometimes I'm alone.
You see me so I am really not.
I sometimes think of how it would be without you and me
but would I really be happy?
I must continue to look inside myself to keep me in focus
so you will know who I am.
I couldn't harm myself really.
Because I have you to take care of me
You see?
So if the thought ever crosses your mind
that you never mean that much to me
I will see to it that you know
we're all in this together.
We are one.
No one can be you but you!

Bruce Bass talked in class one day about a new song he was writing called "Through Your Eyes." He asked the women in the class to help him see through a woman's eyes. He received the following responses.

## Untitled

Janet Verrill

Through your eyes you cannot see
The pain-filled love that lives in me
The joy of birth a mother knows
With pain as all her children go
Their separate ways, their lives to live
Which leaves me with such love to give
To empty arms and empty spaces
Such longing for their precious faces

The joy to see your child succeed
Yet pain with no one left to feed
Your children grow and bring you pride
Yet you always force yourself to hide
The pain you feel from empty rooms
The silence barely short of gloom

You smile and tell them it's okay
Let them go further day by day
Into the world far from your reach
And hope you've done your job to teach
Them to be happy safe and well
No matter where they choose to dwell

Perhaps you're glad you cannot see
What you might feel is agony
But with this pain comes love and joy
From my daughters and my boy
A joy and love too deep to ever
Truly leave me — it will never.

# I Can See You, But I Can't Hear You

Jane E. Carroll

I can hear, but I can't see. I listen, but I can't understand. Tell me what you mean. We talk two different languages. The languages sound the same and are spoken the same, but we interpret them differently. Different times, different cultures, different sexes. We think, see and feel differently at what we hear.

Do you hear what I am saying? Sometimes I say one thing and mean the other. Is this a human error, or is it a war? Is this a flaw that I hear differently? Listen, this can be very serious. Are you serious enough to listen? Listen to me and tell me what you hear.

When you get angry, are you really hurting? Hurting because of something I said? Did what I say offend you? Did I do it deliberately? At times I did and at times I didn't. This can be very complicated. Tell me what you mean. I tell you, I can't see inside you. I focus on the outside, and think I see the inside. Are you empty or am I empty?

I see from all the experiences I have had in life. Maybe we have not experienced the same things, therefore we hear differently. Maybe your tone of voice frightens me and that is why I cannot hear you. Or that look that I do not trust, or maybe you do not trust my answer.

Whatever it reasons out to, I think we should talk. I promise I will listen. But you had better check with me, to see what mood I am in.

# 2 Songs

William Jacque

## He wasn't a Hero

He never fought a bear or met one in his den,
but that man I swear, had the fastest pen.
I survived all those fights, in the old west,
it was those by Lamour, that I liked best.

Mister Lamour was well known for western tales,
a few at the store, with the clerk making sales.
He wrote those novels and the message he'd send,
about miners with shovels or a claim they defend.

CHORUS

A wanted man's poster near the door at the store.
The bartender at Dolly's, big spittoon on the floor.
Then some of Kit Carson, who rode the Pony Express.
How the Marshal in Wichita, cleaned up the mess.

Some left the saloon where bums had their fill,
just sowing wild oats or seeking some thrill.
Were warned not to lock horns with old Will,
lest their vacation might end, out on Boot Hill.

CHORUS

Old Will rode on the back of a big, rugged bay
and he met ruthless men but never turned away.
Many wild tales, often followed Will Sonnett,
a part he disliked and in fact didn't want it.

Robbers would be smart to leave their loot,
but trouble would start and someone would shoot.
Will took some to Boot Hill, but never beyond it,
real grave mistake for those leaving boots on it.

***Chorus:***
I was right here and heard the whole story.
He told of the hero, his fame and the glory.
I relished excitement and stuck till the end.
So he wasn't a hero, but he still is my friend.

## Katie

I'll be glad to lead, take you by the hand.
I would be faithful, the best a fellow can
I'd like to be your friend, with a fishin' pole.
We would try our luck, at our old wishin' hole.

CHORUS

You'll find lots of boys to carry your books.
You're as sharp as a whip, but also have looks.
You are something special, still my favorite girl.
With hair so dark and shiny, still refusing to curl.

CHORUS

It wasn't long ago that you were just a baby.
Just a chance that we might dance, but maybe.
Recall yesterday and hope for tomorrow together.
We have a true friendship and it will last forever.

CHORUS

You would be a pretty bride with a golden band.
You deserve the best, a good and honest man.
Gonna make some lucky boy, both a friend and wife.
You can make him happy, bring joy into his life.

CHORUS

We learned a bunch together, all the fun it took.
You've had no practice but you will learn to cook.
I'm just an old dreamer and a sentimental fool,
with Katie's hand in hand, Grampa walks to school.

***Chorus:***
One day you'll be growed up and be a
lovely lady.
Right now, you are so young,
my sweet little Katie.

# Up at 4:00 Drinking Milk & Honey

Eugenie Harvey

Bullets spewn out of a gun.
Water on the edge of bottomless falls.
Ultimate explosion, imminent implosion.
Integration, disintegration, trust, it's just
the same bursting God-awful death.

Do you want me to be nice to you?
I will be nice to you and you will be nice to me. It's just
some what
for what
and tat for tits. Call me the
revolving door,
here tomorrow, gone some more. And some more.

I have to do this ugly dying,
untimely death
stuff cold. So little matters anymore and everything.
Yes, you've heard it all before, so
gather closer dear
and tell a few more lies dear, lest I
rise from the dead
and kick you in the butt!

# Untitled

Lee Christian

Almost 6:00 am. Almost sunrise. It's hard to tell in here. The only light is from the dim overhead lights and the indicator lights on the equipment. Ron's asleep. We've broken the shift into two hour segments so we both get a little sleep. Not much of anything happens between midnight and 8:00 am.

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Sometimes I wonder why we even bother with this shift, but since the Army says we must, we do.

Time to wake Ron for the final two hours. I reach over to shake him. His eyelids flutter and then open; his eyes focus and he stretches and yawns.

"Nothing happen?" he says.

"Nope," I reply.

"Well, I'll take over. Get some sleep," he says.

I think for a minute. "No, I think I'll go outside for a while, get some air. We've been cooped up in here for six hours."

I shrug on my field jacket, put my cap on and grab the binoculars. I open the door and step out on the tailgate. Twenty feet or so away the diesel generator drones on as it has twenty-four hours a day for the past week. I climb up the ladder to the left of the door, crawl onto the top of the hut and walk along the top to the front. I sit down on the front edge and let my feet hang over the top of the truck cab.

The sun is just over the horizon directly in front of me. Below the hill on which we are parked, the Elbe river flows toward Hamburg and the North Sea. There are no boats in the river now, but in an hour or so the morning patrol boat will pass, heading south and hugging the opposite bank.

I reach over and pull the binoculars from the case. I put the eyepieces to my eyes, adjust the focus and begin to look for the small pile of lumber lying in the field opposite us. It's still there.

For the past week we've been watching as a line of fence posts is put into place by work crews guarded by several Vopos. To the north, I can see what looks to be a guard tower. I guess that the "Worker's Paradise" has decided to protect its citizens from us "imperialists."

I see a vehicle approaching from the east, but at this distance, it's difficult to tell what it is. This close to the river, I'm fairly certain that it is either military or police.

As the vehicle nears the pile of lumber, I can see that it is a half-track (tracks on the rear wheels and the front). There are several people in it, at least two of whom are in uniform. The vehicle stops and the people in it get out, leaving one uniformed person sitting behind a machine gun which is mounted at the front of the passenger compartment. The others begin to unload tools and more lumber both from the vehicle and from a trailer which I can now see attached to the rear of the vehicle.

Several people begin digging holes, while others grab lumber from the piles and lay them next to the holes.

Apparently this is the fence we had heard was under construction. Eventually, it will run the length of the East/West German border from the Baltic Sea to the border with Czechoslovakia. People trying to leave the East zone will now have to contend not only

with the river and the patrol boats, but with the fence and its towers spaced at regular intervals and eventually with a mine field.

I sit for a while watching the work progress. Several posts are set in the ground, a continuation of the line of posts barely visible to the north.

Suddenly I feel a thumping from underneath me. Ron is trying to get my attention. I get up and walk to the rear of the roof. As I lean over the edge, Ron's head pops out through the door below.

"Coffee's almost ready. Want some?"

"I'll be down in a minute," I reply.

His head withdraws, and I hear him close the doors and walk back to his chair.

I return to the front of the roof, and lift my binoculars to my eyes. The men are still digging. I look back at the half-track, and to my surprise the uniformed man seated in it is looking in my direction through a pair of binoculars. Suddenly he raises one hand and waves. I am startled. He waves again, and this time I wave back. Since none of the workers see this and I am alone on the roof of the truck, the wave between two enemies is a secret shared only with each other.

Ron thumps on the ceiling again and the moment was gone.

I walked to the rear of the roof, turned and wave once more, and climb down to the tailgate. None of this will be in the end of shift report. I open the door and the aroma of coffee surrounds me and then is whisked away by the light breeze. It smells really good. Even now, some thirty years later, the smell of coffee triggers an image of the interior of this hut, the lights glowing on the equipment, and Ron, sprawled in a chair, a cup of coffee cradled in his hands and his feet up on the counter.

I pour a coffee and climb back through the door and sit down on the tailgate. I hear the door open and Ron ask, "What's the matter? Don't like my company?"

"I'm just sick of being inside." I said.

"Want me to write up the report?" he asked.

"Sure," I answered, "shouldn't take long. Nothing much happened."

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# New Found Friends

## Bruce Bass

Once a week we are family
the rest as friends.
I see the French braid connected to a lady so fair
lots of knowledge in her hair
I see a man quiet, but deep always
thinking maybe when he sleeps
another woman tender in stature,
questions galore, curious by nature
wandering but focused
another woman
I see loving in her way for all to see
still another woman with fire in her hair
loves her babies — wishes she was there,
another wise and determined
with a son close to her heart
a man upright in manner
dazzles me with his knowledge
a man with many memories to share in an instant
still another recaptures the glory of forgotten warriors
a man loving and silent, full of love for family
a woman — free spirited — and a smile to match
a woman, conscientious, concerned
I feel you too
a man, a jester. Descriptive eyes a treat
a woman stylish, reserved, but a leader
oh yeah, before I forget, I'm Bruce.

# What are friends for?

Jane E. Carroll

*What are friends for?*
*To talk, to laugh, to share.*

Two of my friends and I eat lunch together every day at the Campus Center at the University of Massachusetts. One friend is Elie, a friend I chummed around with at Greenfield High School a few years ago. We walked to school together. The other is Dotty, who was a year behind us in high school. We have known each other for a long time.

Before Elie and I were married, we would share boyfriends. By that I mean Elie was living in Boston and Pat was living in Boston. Veets and I both lived back in our home towns. Veets and I would drive together on weekends to Boston. Veets to visit Elie and I to visit Pat and stay at Elie's apartment. When my daughter Diane flew to Seattle, on her own, Elie gave me her sister Dotty's address and telephone number so Diane could have a friend in a strange city. Dotty invited Diane to stay at her home for a couple of nights.

The other Dotty, that I eat with, married a friend of mine named Irving. Irving was the boyfriend of my friend Kathleen. Kathleen eventually married a student from the University of Massachusetts, where she was working as a secretary. Now Dotty, who married Irving, works at the University of Massachusetts as a secretary. They didn't share boyfriends.

Pat, who married Jane, that's me, graduated from the University of Massachusetts, where Jane now works as a secretary. Are we all connected or what?

Back to lunch time.

Elie always brings a bag lunch, but being the big time spender that she is, she buys a soda everyday to drink with the everyday lunch of bologna sandwich made with potato bread (because daughter Karen, likes potato bread), potato chips, and whatever fruit was on sale at Stop & Shop, or whatever leftover was dying in her refrigerator. But, during the summer months, she has a special treat of cucumber sandwiches (everyday) from her husband's garden. That would be Veets, who cleans the refrigerator once a week of whatever Elie hasn't retrieved for her lunch, and throws it into a casserole for the evening meal.

Now, Dotty eats yogurt and drinks Seven-Up with an apple or an orange, everyday. Occasionally, she will throw everything back into the lunch bag and demand something more substantial like greasy, salty, crunchy things and soup, the caloric kind.

Well Jane, she just manages to have and eat a whole variety of tasty morsels, something to be envied, that only the UMass Coffee Shop could provide. Well, this throws Dotty into an uproar. She is so jealous.

Things soon settle down to laughter and conversation. There has to be laughter, you see, or how else would or could we face going back to work that afternoon, or even the next morning to the University of Massachusetts, where we all have a prior connection. After all, we haven't had a raise in over four years. We have been well rewarded though, because working at the University of Massachusetts makes it all worthwhile.

# Kisses from Maine

Kathy Colon

It was late in October and Lou and I were going to another counseling session with Ellen for 12:30 that afternoon. Dealing with AT&T in a workman's comp case for the past four and a half years was certainly taking its toll on our family and I could feel the absolute tension in my entire body. So much pain, anger and frustration with them still refusing to be responsible for an injury that definitely happened on the job.

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Usually when Lou and I go together for these sessions, he ends up doing most of the talking. But this late autumn day, with the colorful leaves no longer hanging off the trees, was different. When we walked in, Ellen must have seen the neon sign on my face that said "I AM EXTREMELY STRESSED OUT!!!" — She immediately announced that this session would be focused on me. Lou would not be allowed to talk about what was bothering him this time. She asked me a few questions, making a point of having me realize that there is very little I do for my own personal benefit and well-being. Almost all of my energy is spent on Rachel, Lou, my job, my mom and dad, the house, the pets, the laundry, the shopping, etc, etc, etc.... The only thing I could find that I gave myself was a hot quiet bath a few times a week to ease some of the tension that had built up. So then and there Ellen ordered me to take a weekend off for myself, to get away either by myself or with a girlfriend, and leave everyone else behind. This was to be done sometime before Christmas, and she made me *promise* that I would do this and she made sure Lou agreed to give me no grief about going — this was to be *my* time! How could anyone turn down such great advice from their doctor... it was *doctor's orders* that I take a weekend and that's just what I did.

It took a while since every weekend seemed to have one commitment or another already attached to it. It wasn't until the 16th and 17th of December, just nine days before Christmas, that my girlfriend, Beth, and I decided we would be able to head for Maine. I felt a little guilty choosing Maine for a destination, but I could think of no place else I would rather be to relax. I also knew Rachel and Lou would love to go to Maine, but I had my doctor's orders to follow.... and I truly needed it. This was something I had to do for my own sanity. I was the one expected to hold our family together and I was falling apart at the seams on all levels.

Being winter in New England, there is always that chance that the weather could put up road blocks to our escape, and that was exactly what happened. The weekend before we were to go was just gorgeous — sunny, warm, *very* pleasant — the ideal weekend, but neither of us were able to break away from previous commitments so it *had* to be the following weekend. It was Tuesday or Wednesday of that following week that they started doing a projected forecast into the weekend, with warnings of getting hit with yet *another* snowstorm. Everyone kept telling us we'd better forget about going and I actually started thinking that we should play it safe and cancel our trip. But when Friday night rolled around and the weathermen were saying the storm would start around 8:00 or 9:00 Saturday morning, I called Beth and told her we should leave at 6:00 am to try and beat the snow and that we should meet at Dunkin Donuts. She agreed, so that night I started packing my car with everything I

could think of — including extra blankets in case we got stuck in some bad weather somewhere along the way.

I was so excited! We were really going after all, with everyone we knew figuring we were crazy! I guess they're right, because we met at Dunkin Donuts at 6:00 am sharp and Beth followed me to my niece's house where we left her car and took off in mine, despite the weather report! Already the snow was starting to fly, but that just seemed to add to the excitement of it all... I joked with Beth, saying the sun would be shining when we got to Maine and we were quite surprised to find that by the time we got to Gardner on Route 2, the sun had indeed, poked its head out! Lady luck was smiling on us and our undaunting determination! And when we were finally approaching the Maine border, snowflakes were just starting to fall from the sky, amidst the sunshine. It felt so special. We made our way off 95 onto the coastal route in Biddeford. Having left so early in the morning, here we were in Maine by 10:00 am — we had the whole day ahead of us to play! We decided before we stopped to see the ocean we would first find ourselves a place to say for the night and get our things settled in. After checking out one or two places, we decided on the East Winds Motel. The room we chose had everything we needed and the decor felt like us. We even got a reduced season rate and it was only a few minutes walk to the ocean! We had found our piece of heaven for the weekend. We quickly unloaded the car and made our room our home with candles and all of our little goodies. Knowing we didn't have a lot of money to spend, we brought a stash of food with us like bagels, coffee, milk, juice, cereal, bread.... there really wasn't much we forgot, if anything! When all of our things were in their place, we pondered where we wanted to go and decided what we wanted to do the most was to go to Kennebunkport to check out the shops and possibly go on to Goose Rocks Beach where I had experienced the ocean for the very first time 20 years ago. It was such an odd feeling knowing we could do whatever we wanted to at that moment, within our means and we both laughed like two little school girls and pranced around the room in our delight. Some of that built up tension was beginning to roll right off our heads and shoulders the more we got into our freedom.

It was like a dream when we rode into Kennebunkport at one that afternoon. The snow had really begun to fly and the whole town seemed to be aglow with festive Christmas lights everywhere. I parked the car off a side street by a restaurant that had been closed for the season and some shops that looked very inviting. We wasted no time, stopping into the first shop that caught both our attention, which just happened to be the first shop there. We went from one to the other, and I was thrilled to find an art gallery of Thomas Kinkaide's work, an artist that my daughter had discovered while staying with my niece and her husband a couple of summers ago near Seattle, Washington. We both fell in love with so many of the paintings and pictures there, but with our budgets, we were happy to find they also had post cards and calendars which we ended up getting. The man who ran the shop was very friendly, talking to us about the different

paintings and filling us in on Mr. Kinkaide, as he and his wife were friends of Kinkaide. How exciting! They had another shop of his work in Boston, but loved Maine too, so they decided to try a shop in Kennebunkport. After chatting a little bit longer, I grabbed my checkbook, keys, and my package and we headed out for our next flight of fancy.

Neither one of us could believe we were actually doing this! We went at our own leisurely pace until our stomachs started to clue us in on the fact that it was time to stop for lunch. We made our way across the bridge with snow flying right in our faces and as chilly as we were, we couldn't imagine anyone having a better day than we were right now. The Dockside was warm and the people inside were laughing and chatting as they sat around tables eating. The hostess quickly escorted us to a table in the far left corner - right beside the windows overlooking the boats in the dock. It was perfect! We ordered bowls of steaming clam chowder and a large roast beef sandwich which we split since we knew the chowder itself would be quite filling. It felt so good to be sitting there laughing and looking out at the boats with one all decorated with white lights running up the sails and even a Christmas tree at the very top. By the time we finished lunch we knew we couldn't possibly fit in dessert, so we gathered our bags, paid the bill and bundled up for our next Maine adventure! Basically, we shopped our way back to the car, delighting in the fact that we were actually doing some of our Christmas shopping for people here, in our blissful freedom. We found books, cards... even a couple of novelty cigarette lighters for my dad that worked without a child-proof safety lock on them, which I knew he would appreciate. We grabbed a few post cards to send too, since this was definitely one of those getaways you wanted to be able to tell somebody about!

Snowcovered, we dashed our way back to the car, pondering what we wanted to do next. We decided that instead of going to Goose Rocks Beach, we would make our way back to the motel since the snowfall seemed to be getting heavier and we certainly didn't need any stressful adventures of getting stuck somewhere! When I dug through my coat pockets to get my keys out, I pulled out not only my set of keys, but a set of keys that looked *nothing* like mine, and I had no idea where I'd gotten them! I was totally confused.... We figured I must have picked them up in one of the shops while paying for my purchase, but the exact scene wasn't coming to mind. We stopped in the very first shop we were in and asked the shopkeeper there if she recognized them. She said they did look a little familiar, and noticed a Toyota key on the ring and immediately thought of another gentleman who had a shop on the next street up from where we were, at the art gallery! She tried reaching him by phone, but got no answer. I felt awful.... we had had so much fun talking to him and here I had taken off with his keys! As fate would have it, he stopped in to her shop to see if he had left his keys there himself. I was so embarrassed and so relieved to see that he hadn't gone through any major ordeals without them... and he was happy to have found them so quickly, he just laughed. On that note, we cleaned off the car and headed back to the

East Winds Motel, cracking up over what had just happened.

Trying to keep an eye on our dwindling funds, we ate at a local pizza shop that evening and then stopped at Shop 'N Save to pick up what little treats we wanted for later on. We even found a special riesling wine we hadn't had in a long time, and the price was right so we were definitely set for winding down our night in Maine. We laughed, played cards, watched TV and talked and talked and talked..... as only good friends can do.

When we woke up the next morning, it was about 9:00 am and we stretched and laughed and took our showers and ate bagels, coffee and juice for breakfast and then decided to pack up the car so we could carouse the rest of our time at a leisurely pace. We could have walked from the motel to the few shops up the road, but we chose to take the car since the wind had really started kicking up and it was feeling pretty chilly. We found a few more bargains, including a pair of silver eagle earrings that matched a necklace I bought at Pike Place Market a couple of years ago. From the shops we made our way over to the beach with two huge loaves of bread to feed the sea gulls and sat out there for quite a while, catching some of the warm rays from the sun. Just being there, watching the waves roll and crash, listening to the cries of the sea gulls as they eagerly watched our every move as long as we carried those bags of bread, felt wonderful.

This was some of the medicine I had come here for. Somehow, it felt like being home. I kept thinking how special this all was and how could I ever thank Ellen enough for giving me this time for myself. I realized that so many women desperately need this, but would probably never make the time to do it... to escape.... to run away for a day or two, for no one, but themselves. We were two of the lucky ones. Beth and I dropped our postcards in the mailbox.... Kisses from Maine.... to ourselves, just to make sure we remembered, doctor's orders.

# Writer's Biographies

**Bruce Bass** is a lover of music. His dream is to have a fifteen piece orchestra — or even larger — so that he can bring the romance back to music. His hope is to touch the hearts of people with his music and his words.

**Jane E. Carroll** is a secretary at UMass. She currently attends a local community college in the evenings while raising six children, including a set of twins. She has been a member on the Board of Directors for the Turners Falls Women's Club, Farren Hospital Guild, Pioneer Valley Symphony. She has also been an elected Town Meeting member for a number of years. In addition, Jane has studied voice at the Performing Arts Division for three years at the University and performed in two operas with Project Opera.

**Alice Chapin** has been at the UMass since 1984. She started as an "O3" consultant in the Infirmary as a Receptionist/Aide in the Physical Therapy Department. After that, she transferred to part-time in the laundry at Boyden Gym then to full-time in the equipment cage. At present, she works in the Physical Plant in the Customer Service (old Work Control) Department. Alice has lived in the Pioneer Valley since 1956 when she moved here from Long Island, New York. Alice has five children and six grandchildren and spends her spare time playing the trumpet in the Montague Community Band.

**Lee Christian** was born and raised in Gill, Mass. He graduated from Turners Falls High School in 1960 and entered US Army after graduating from US Army Language School in 1961 (learning Russian). Lee then served two years in Germany and was discharged from the army in 1963. Upon returning to the US, Lee attended UMass for several years, then held various jobs until coming to work at UMass in 1973. He currently works in HVAC Maintenance. Lee is married, with one daughter, and lives in Belchertown.

**Kathy Colon** is a 41 year old wife, mother, daughter, sister, friend, and co-worker. She has a high-spirited love and respect for life and nature and draws much of her inspiration from all of the above. She has found writing to be, not only a great pleasure, but also an important key to her sense of balance in this very hectic world as it requires a sense of peaceful space. She finds that through written word, what she sees and knows in her understanding of life, will be shared and passed on. Her greatest ambitions are to travel, to have some inspirational space to call her own and ultimately, to be happy.

**Carl Davignon** is as his writing . . .
for few to understand . . . .

**Mike Drew** has been a janitor at the UMass for ten years. By the time he leaves he hopes to have written a collection of stories about life in the working class.

**Lee Forester** is a 47 year old Licensed Plumber /Steamfitter. He has worked at UMass for seventeen years. He has been married for 22 years to his wife, Sue. They both have an 18 year old daughter, Sarah, who attends the University of Massachusetts/ Dartmouth. Lee joined the Marine Corps in 1968 which included a one year tour in Vietnam. Thirteen years after leaving the Marine Corps, Lee joined the Marine Corps Reserves. In 1990, he was returned to active duty service where he served in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. His Infantry Battalion was the only Marine Reserve Infantry Unit to enter Kuwait on 23 February with the first Marine Division. He is currently a Gunnery Sergeant for Tow Platoon, 25th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, at Westover Air Reserve Base in Chicopee.

**Eugenie Harvey** is a writer at large, a poet at heart.

**Christine Heard** is a mother of five adult children and has worked as a secretary at the Department of Music and Dance at the University of Massachusetts for the past year. She earned a B.A. from American University and an M.Ed. from Cambridge College. Christine has lived in South Korea and Sri Lanka and has done migrant farm work (picking blueberries in Maine) for many of the past 22 years. She is a gardener, a reader and a photographer, as well as a writer.

**Linda Hillenbrand** has green eyes, dark blond hair and is average in height. Although she works in Women's Studies, she doesn't yet think of herself as a feminist. At 35 years old she's learned a lot about herself and has become stronger and smarter. Raising her 6 year old son alone has made her more self sufficient and responsible, too very tiring attributes. She finds time to do two jobs, take care of her son and has been searching for ways to find time for herself. She reads many books, enjoys her computer, and has most recently gotten involved in weight training.

This is about me, **David Hutchins.** Where do I start? I'm a person that looks at a problem and I try to find the best resolution to the problem. I'm not perfect, but I do try and find answers to some problems. If I think I'm right and you can prove that I'm wrong, I will go along with you. I love to shoot archery. It's fun and you can meet some very nice people. In the Spring, I like to lie on the ground on my back and look up at the sky. You can look beyond the Earth out into space. You realize how small you are. During the daytime, you can see the blue sky and the sun, but at nighttime, everything changes. The moon is out and hundreds of stars. And my dear friends, you wonder what is beyond for as far as you can see the stars and space.

**William Jacqae** was born on a farm in Amherst, MA. He is a 1956 graduate of Amherst High School and a graduate of Army Officer School in 1963. From 1966 to 1987 Bill operated a dairy farm in Colrain, MA. In 1987 he began working for the Colrain police department as well as the University of Massachusetts. Bill then successfully completed course work at Greenfield Community College for a certificate in Criminal Justice. He is currently working for the UMass parking Department. His daughter is the Bursar at Greenfield Community College; his son is a coach at Franklin Tech. He has remarried and now also has three stepsons. Bill is into songs and recording.

**Frances Martin, Jr.** is a veteran writer and reporter. He attended the Northwestern University School of Journalism and has worked as an investigative reporter. He edits the local newsletter of the Polish-American genealogical society, and is an expert genealogical researcher. Francis currently works as a supervisor in Auxiliary Services. He is an active steward in AFSCME Local 1776.

**Claire Galenski Myette** has worked at UMass for twenty years. She began working in the Department of Public Safety and for the past twenty years has been in charge of parking services for the University Health Center. Claire has taken a number of classes with the L/MWEP including Leadership and an earlier writing class, entitled "Stories From the Field", which also published a small book. She is a member of the L/MWEP Advisory Committee and the Planning and Evaluation Committee. She is an active member of AFSCME Local 1776 and is currently serving as steward. She has two grown children, a daughter and a son.

**Sophie Sidur** lives in Ware, Massachusetts, where she settled when she immigrated from Poland. She has worked and supported herself since she was sixteen years old. She has also raised a son. She now works with Housing Services.

**Judie Towlson**, lover of God, life, art, truth and justice. I am on my quest to maximize each day and to live life with balance and love. However, each day seems to be full of responsibilities that get in the way!!!

**Janet Verrill** is a single mother of three. She works full time in Athletics at UMass and is also a full-time student at the Adult Degree program of Norwich University. Her concentration of study is Literature and Writing. All of her family members are involved in theatre both in the community, as well as college.

**Elisabeth Williams** was born and grew up "part of the way" in North Carolina and the "rest of the way" between the rows of corn in the midwest in Indiana. She is now trying to age gracefully here in Massachusetts. Elisabeth took this class "on a lark" and enjoyed it, but doesn't really consider herself a writer. "I feel very honored to be included in this grouping; writing isn't something that I do much of." Elizabeth is currently a member of the Housing Staff in Northeast/Sylvan area and during her spare time is employed as a string bassist with two different bands, one bluegrass and the other, western swing. Between work, life, and being a musician on the side, she is kept quite busy.

## Reflections Beneath the Surface

## We Are More Than You See

*Looking into a well*
*You see a reflection on the surface*
*Never what lies underneath . . .*
*As I . . . .*

Carl Davignon

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